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Whither the Nicaraguan Revolution?

JAMES PETRAS

China's Uninterrupted Revolution

MARK SELDEN

The Work Experience in Literature

DAVID HERRESHOFF

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

October 1979 marks the 30th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese Revolution, and we are publishing Mark Selden's article, "China's Uninterrupted Revolution," beginning on page 24 below to commemorate this historic event. Mark Selden is the editor and contributor of a fine introduction to *The People's Republic of China: A Documentary History of Revolutionary Change,* recently published by MR Press. The book has already received several enthusiastic reviews, including one in the *New York Times* Sunday book review section (August 12, 1979) which ordinarily does not deign to notice MR Press books.

Our old friend Louis Harap (author of "Profit and Illth: From Carlyle to Ruskin to Morris," MR, December 1978) calls our attention to a review of Robert Tressell's *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* (reprinted by MR Press last year) which was written by Randolph Bourne, the American left literary critic, when the book was first published in 1914. Bourne's review was included in a collection of his writings, *The History of a Literary Radical and Other Essays* (Russell & Russell, 1956), and could well have been reproduced in MR at the time of reprinting of *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists.* "This book," wrote Bourne, "written with the bitterness of relentless realism by a socialist house-painter in an

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

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WHITHER THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION?

By James Petras

James Petras wrote this article after a trip to Costa Rica during the summer, just as the fighting was ending in Nicaragua. He is a frequent contributor to MONTHLY REVIEW and is the author of several MR Press books, the most recent being *Critical Perspectives on Imperialism and Social Class in the Third World*. To help readers follow the text, a glossary of terms used by the author has been provided at the end of the article.
—*The Editors*

> "We want enormously to go out and help, but we find we don't have the opportunity. We're worried that the junta is saying one thing, and the commanders in the field may be going their own way."
>
> Nicaraguan business member of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (New York Times, July 26, 1979)

The Nicaraguan revolution has great substantive importance for the country and even greater symbolic significance for the continent. For the first time in over 20 years it was demonstrated that a U.S.-armed and -trained military dictatorship could be defeated in a popular armed upheaval. The defeats of the past decade have weighed heavily on all the popular movements: defeats in Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and elsewhere throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Now as we approach the 1980s there is a resurgence of popular democratic mass movements throughout Latin America; among them the Sandinista-led forces have been the most developed and, to date, have made the only successful effort.

Just as the Nicaraguan revolution has had a profound symbolic impact on Latin America, so have many Latin Americans contributed to its victory with their arms and lives. Volunteers

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arrived from all over Latin America—from the age of 15 to 40, veterans and novices, militants and idealists—to join the Frente Sandinista de Liberación (FSLN). They came to fight against Somoza—symbol of tyranny, corruption, and wealth, of U.S. training, support, and subservience. These internationalists included Costa Ricans, who had seen the gap between the profession of democracy and the practice of privilege; Chileans, who had suffered the defeat of a revolution without a struggle, at the hands of the military and the United States, and who sought to redeem themselves; Mexicans, who came out of peasant movements and who saw in Nicaragua a chance to relive the struggles of the past, equalizing the odds. There were Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, who had suffered the same kind of terror and destruction as the Nicaraguans and saw a chance to even the score, ending the reign of the regional gendarme and hopefully opening a new chapter—the first truly sovereign state in Central America governed by the people, not by oligarchies of a few dozen families. They came from Colombia's occupied universities, from the offices and factories of Venezuela, from the Argentine and Chilean diaspora.

These Latin American revolutionaries built barricades, together with the embattled streetfighters of Managua, Masaya, Estelí, and León—cities made famous throughout the world by the thousands of anonymous militants who took to the streets and defended their *barrios* with rifles against Sherman tanks, and moved from city to city until they captured the last bunker in Managua.

Nothing functioned in Nicaragua without the permission of the FSLN. The workers, having traded their tools for guns, took the decision to struggle to victory or to die. The slogan, "the final struggle, cost what it may," which began as a rhetorical exhortation of a guerrilla band, came to be the living expression of a determined and committed people. Factories were closed (or in ruins); ports and transport were paralyzed; the marketplaces were empty, the stalls burned; the vendors (who had nothing to sell) had, weeks earlier, hidden scores of clandestine guerrillas who were entering the city. Even the prostitutes, wielding knives, advised Somoza's National Guard patrols to keep going.

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Overview: The Nicaraguan Revolution

There are several features of the Nicaraguan revolution to be studied that are important to the rest of the Third World, especially Latin America. The writings that focus exclusively on the uniqueness of the Somoza dynasty and its wealth overlook several historical processes that are operating on a world scale, and that found expression in the Nicaraguan revolution. This article will focus on: (1) historical developments that generated the revolutionary upheaval; (2) the nature of the revolutionary process, the changing patterns, configurations of forces, strategies and alliances; and (3) contradictory developments in the transitional period—the relationship between the organisms of popular power, which were instrumental in the insurrectionary phase, and the governing organisms, which emerged largely from exile, and were recruited for the most part from bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces.

Capitalist Development: Autocracy and Revolution

It is important first to deal with several misconceptions about the socio-economic context of the revolutionary struggle. Nicaragua was not a simple "underdeveloped" country, wallowing in stagnation and backwardness. From the 1950s to the mid-1970s, the Nicaraguan economy underwent a period of rapid growth—large-scale commercialization of agriculture and high-powered expansion of industry, services, and finance. While most observers have noted the private wealth and corruption of Somoza, it is not usually pointed out that a portion of that wealth took the form of capital investments. The growth of capitalism was accompanied in part by the proletarianization of some of the peasants in the countryside and the artisans in the city, along with the displacement of others, and their incorporation into a large surplus labor pool which crowded the central cities in each region. The state—the Somoza clan—and foreign capital played a decisive role in implanting capitalism and capitalist social relations. The whole process of rapid growth from above was made possible by the autocratic dictatorship and its "free market" and repressive labor policies—a pattern not unknown to other Latin American countries. This configuration of forces displaced many fractions and sectors of traditional mer-

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cantile society, while failing to integrate or provide mechanisms of representation for the new classes generated by the pattern of capitalist development. The very terms for success of the autocratic development-from-above-and-outside model prevented sustained and consequential *democratization*. Rather, the pattern was one of selective and time-bound *liberalization*—modifications of dictatorial policies—followed by widespread and systematic repression. While the competitors for power were largely located within the two capitalist parties (Liberals and Conservatives), and while the adversaries were mostly capitalist competitors, conflict—including armed and mass activity—was largely used as a bargaining weapon to secure a larger share of government revenues (subsidies, credit, etc.), and led to pacts between Somoza and his bourgeois critics. This pattern began to change only with the massive entry on the scene of the FSLN. In fact, parallel to the intransigent opposition of the FSLN, the bourgeois opposition continued to attempt to "deal" with Somoza, the United States, etc., in much the traditional pattern. The only difference was that the results, because they were unsatisfactory from the point of view of the masses, gave further sustenance to the FSLN and ultimately undermined bourgeois control of the mass movement. Hence, the growth of capitalism and intrabourgeois conflicts provided a gloss of "competitive" politics, limited by overwhelming concentration of power in the hands of the autocratic dictatorship and the total subordination of the National Guard to Somoza.

Rapid capitalist growth premised on large labor surpluses, labor discipline (the suppression of strikes, protests, etc.), and both extensive and intensive exploitation provided fertile grounds for social mobilization in the cities and larger agro-industrial complexes. Unlike the early Sandino-led movement, largely based on peasant recruits, the contemporary Nicaraguan revolution is generally rooted in the most urbanized, industrialized areas—the most "advanced" sectors of production and social reproduction. The revolutionary movement contains the most retrograde forces displaced by dynamic state and foreign capitalist development—the small and medium producers—as well as the new industrial working class, middle-sector professionals, employees (from the modern industrial and service sec-

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tors), and the large reserves of under- and unemployed semi-proletarianized youth of the cities and countryside—products of the process of uprooting which accompanies capitalist development. Generally the most passive and least rebellious sectors, with some notable exceptions, were to be found in the agricultural areas least affected by commercial-capitalist activity—the isolated villages and communities of the south. The concentration of employed and unemployed workers in cities, the growth of impersonal wage relations instead of payment in kind, and the decline of personal forms of domination and control in the sprawling urban slums fostered antagonistic relations. The autocratic state, prime mover of capitalist growth, emasculated legitimate organs of representation and prevented effective articulation of demands for urban services. The social overhead costs for the reproduction of labor were borne directly and totally by the producers themselves. Hence, the growth of neighborhood organizations, initially active around local and immediate needs, became the vehicle for FSLN mobilizations: only the most radical and determined organizations capable of withstanding the dictatorship could sustain a consequential struggle for incremental gains. The neighborhood became the principal point of organization, the common meeting ground, for employed and unemployed workers, proletarians and semi-proletarians. The target was the state—the dispenser of social services, controller of social expenditures, the critical agent for urban real-estate speculation and slum eradication.

While the economic boom increased the social weight of the working class and employees in the cities, the economic downturns marginalized the bourgeoisie, especially those medium and small owners without access to state credits and subsidies, pushing them closer to bankruptcy and threatening their property-owning status. The crisis and the lack of access to the Somoza-dominated state pushed the marginalized bourgeoisie into opposition. The convergence of workers and sections of the middle class and leading capitalists into a common anti-Somoza, pro-democratic struggle obscures the fundamentally different interests these sectors were pursuing, as well as their differing concepts of the state. For the bourgeoisie and its petty bourgeois political representatives the issue is one of securing

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access to the state for the promotion of its class interests—financing, credit, protection, subsidies, contracts—and the rapid demobilization and disarming of the masses in order to create a new state apparatus in a proximate image of itself. For the masses, democracy is the generalization and maintenance of the local organs of popular power—extending them to encompass control of the productive forces to serve neighborhood needs. *The most crucial issue in the post-Somoza period is political not economic: reconstruction by whom and for whom?* The concentration of the insurrectionary struggles in the cities and among the most radicalized working class forces raises the issue of the *socialist* potentialities inherent in the struggle. The uneven nature of capitalist development, its concentration in certain urban/rural areas, finds expression in the uneven development of the revolutionary struggle. The insurrectionary struggle in the cities developed far in advance of the struggle in general: more important, the tempo and tasks of the revolution are not dictated by the *general* level of the productive forces in the *country as a whole*, but by the level of *class struggle* in the *most advanced* areas.

The Nature of the Revolutionary Process

The revolutionary process in Nicaragua was put into motion through a wide array of complementary and combined forms of struggle over a long period of time. Moreover, the revolutionary movement went through several phases, correcting itself, altering its course, dividing and converging for the final assault on the Somoza dictatorship. The central organization responsible for the overthrow of the autocratic regime was unquestionably the FSLN, whose origins and development are rooted in the Nicaraguan revolutionary experience of the 1920s and 1930s and in more recent Latin American history. Several aspects of the FSLN's program are traceable to Sandino: (a) *nationalism* and *anti-imperialism* as a basic tenet of its program—in contrast to other pro-United States oppositionists who presented themselves to the Embassy as "a democratic alternative"; (b) *reliance on mass support* as opposed to efforts, mainly by the bourgeoisie, to organize elite conspiracies and military coups behind the backs of the masses, aiming to sub-

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stitute one elite for another; and (c) *development of armed struggle* as the only effective means of overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship (hence rejection of all "negotiations," "pacts," and U.S.-sponsored mediations, which were recognized as ploys to prolong the life of the regime and/or modify it in nonessential ways). Founded in 1961, and heavily influenced by both the *foco* theory of guerrilla warfare and the success of the Cuban Revolution, the FSLN launched a series of military actions designed to detonate popular uprisings. These isolated military actions, led largely by students and members of the professions, were easily put down by the military, who inflicted substantial losses but failed to destroy the organization. With the failure of the *foco* strategy, a complete change in tactics and orientation was introduced and applied beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The decisive shift was toward the organization of mass support in the countryside and cities; the new perspectives envisioned a prolonged, popular war which would combine rural guerrilla activities, constant harassment of the Guard, mass struggle in the cities, immediate struggle on local issues and political demands, legal and illegal organization; these efforts were to culminate in the organization of a general strike, the arming of the masses and a national insurrection. The revolutionary insurrection was seen as a process, not an event. The process leading to the insurrection can be divided into three phases:

1. Accumulation of Forces in Silence: 1970-1974

The FSLN, generally not acting in its own name, engaged in organizing, mobilizing, and agitating in neighborhoods, trade unions, and schools by means of intermediate organizations which projected the basis for the organization of popular power. Through these intermediate organizations, the FSLN began to forge links with the mass movement and establish its legitimacy as a representative of the people. Its presence in everyday struggles for light, water, sewers, combined with its organizational demands for political rights, began to legitimize the FSLN as a national alternative to Somoza. Its participation in the strikes and protests following the 1972 earthquake—when the workday was arbitrarily extended, aid funds were pocketed, and busi-

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nessmen displaced—increased its importance, especially among the urban working and middle class.

2. Accumulation of Forces with Offensive Tactics: September 1974-August 1978

On September 22, 1974, the FSLN captured a number of high-level backers of the regime and was able to liberate a substantial number of political prisoners. This action signaled a new turn in the struggle which saw local demands increasingly combined with national political issues: neighborhood issues with attacks on the dictatorial nature of the state; trade-union rights with demands for the freeing of political prisoners. A rising wave of mass protests and demonstrations forced the liberal bourgeoisie to augment its pressure on Somoza. After the assassination of *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquín Chamorro in January 1978, the bourgeoisie attempted to channel discontent into a general strike (during which the workers were paid). But the strikes which were begun by the bourgeoisie passed beyond its control; the failure of the bourgeois-led general strike to topple Somoza and its unwillingness to sustain the struggle to the end severely eroded its mass support, and hastened the mass shift toward the FSLN. Throughout this period, both mass organization in the cities and guerrilla harassment in the countryside increased.

3. Accumulation of Forces in Strategic Offensive: September 1978-July 1979

The constant mobilizations, conflict, and repression created the objective conditions for insurrection. Whole neighborhoods and sectors of the city were openly defiant of the regime; the intermediate organizations joined together in the Movimiento Pueblo Unido (MPU) and openly recognized the FSLN as their representative leader, thus converting it from a guerrilla to a mass organization. The Somoza regime became increasingly isolated: the bourgeoisie was organized in the Frente Amplio de Oposición (FAO); the liberal democrats, calling themselves Los Doce (The Twelve), were openly calling for the overthrow of Somoza, the disbanding of the Guard, and a coalition including the FSLN; and the MPU extended its organizational network to virtually the entire country.

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While politically vulnerable, Somoza was still militarily strong. The insurrection of September 1978 was partly spontaneous and partly the result of an initiative by a faction of the Sandinistas (the Terceristas, a social democratic wing). A general strike was called by the MPU following the seizure of the Government Palace by the Terceristas and uprisings in Matagalpa, Monimbó, Masaya, León, Chinandega, and the rest of the major cities and towns. The National Guard and Air Force destroyed cities, houses, hospitals, and schools in their attempt to drown the insurrection in blood. They failed. The genocidal repression polarized the whole country *against* Somoza and *for* the FSLN. At that point, the FSLN had to face the problems of: (1) unifying the three forces; (2) organizing and coordinating the insurrections at the national level; (3) attacking strategic areas affecting the regime; (4) dispersing its forces to several fronts; and (5) arming the organized local committees in each city.

The strengths and limitations of the September uprising were analyzed. There were two principal problems: (1) within the FSLN there were several substantially differing conceptions of political-military strategy which impeded a unified action, and (2) the lack of sufficient arms forced the populace to rely on hunting weapons and handguns, on revolvers against tanks. The first problem was resolved by a unification agreement among the Sandinista tendencies, signed in March 1979; the second by a concerted effort to organize and arm popular militias, the Comités de Defensa Civil (CDCs), and the Comités de Defensa de Trabajadores (CDTs) throughout the major cities. The positive results of the September insurrection were to be found in the general recognition of the importance of the masses in military tasks and the centrality of political organization.

These organizational experiences prepared the masses to carry out political-administrative tasks in the May-July 1979 uprising. In regard to tactics the FSLN leadership had come to recognize that the armed forces of the regime had to be engaged outside the population centers prior to the mass insurrection, in order to relieve some of the pressure on the local committees and militia and provide them with an opportunity to

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establish themselves. By the beginning of 1979 a new wave of unrest was growing. February brought another uprising in Monimbó (Masaya), continual guerrilla and militia harassment of the Guard, daily barricades and street demonstrations, the takeover of churches, schools, and other buildings. By May the neighborhoods were ready to explode again, but this time the insurrection was organized, the militants were armed, and the FSLN command was unified. Within a month, 20 cities were in the hands of the people. From the beginning of the insurrection, the local committees took charge in León, Estelí, Masaya, Matagalpa—areas of large concentrations of workers, with long traditions of militancy and political struggle; both factors weighed heavily on the level of organization. In León and Masaya, the CDTs were transformed into military organizations, organizing seizures of towns, taking over factories and continuing production. In the rest of the country, the CDCs functioned as politico-administrative and defense units: sustaining defense, distributing food, maintaining sanitary conditions.

The FSLN leadership—especially where the Guerra Popular Prolongada (GPP) and Tendencia Proletaria (TP) factions predominated—envisioned the CDCs and CDTs as playing a major role in all aspects of the insurrectionary effort. The functions of the CDCs have been described as follows: (a) training the masses in all forms of civil defense; (b) creating groups of guards to protect and supply the neighborhoods, preventing the activity of anarchistic groups; (c) creating food and provision outlets; (d) collecting all types of material that could serve to strengthen the barricades; (e) concentrating all materials that could serve for defense against punitive actions by the enemy forces; (f) developing clandestine hospitals and clinics; (g) establishing operational barracks; (h) collecting medicine; (i) orienting the masses in the recovery of food from the regime's supply centers; (j) locating the strategic points through which the enemy might advance; (k) creating linkage and supply groups with the Sandinista military groups fighting in the neighborhoods; and (l) providing information to the militia and military forces about the Guard and other Somoza supporters. As for the CDTs, their objectives were to: (a) obtain control of the principal factories, especially those of a strategic nature, in order to convert them into small war industries;

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(b) take hold of any and all objects that could be used as weapons, and distribute them to the combatants; (c) maintain the workers concentrated as a class, linking their revolutionary activity with that of the neighborhood masses; (d) create obstacles in the strategic transport lines, impeding the enemies' movement; (e) gain control of the means of communication; (f) paralyze the public sector and exhort the technicians to provide aid to the combatants; (g) seize the haciendas of the Somozas and their supporters and transform them into refugee centers for noncombatants; and (h) incorporate fighters into the militias or the Sandinista army.

The successful insurrection in all the major cities and eastern Managua reflected the decade-long political-organizational work of the FSLN. Both the formal organizations and the informal networks functioned to bring about complete solidarity between neighborhood residents and combatants, evidenced in the flood of volunteers and militia units, and the saying that every house was a Sandinista fortress.

Though these mass organizations do not have an explicit class character, the bulk of their membership is drawn from the working class, employed and unemployed, and it would clearly be feasible for them to serve as the basis for a new form of popular representation and government. During the insurrection, the inter-community committees coordinated defense throughout the municipality, and they could effectively serve as the instrument for popular control over reconstruction and as an alternative to the bourgeois-dominated Junta, Cabinet, and Council of State.

Several features of the revolutionary struggle need to be stressed because of their importance not only in the Nicaraguan context, but in terms of future revolutionary struggles in the rest of Latin America.

1. Both the guerrilla movement and the mass urban insurrectionary organizations were necessary for the maintenance of each other's struggle. The earlier debates which had counterposed one approach to the other have been surpassed.

2. The urban mass movements through their organized local power were able to destroy the standing army located in their cities. The notion that urban insurrection is an outdated concept has itself been proved to be outdated. What was clearly

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in evidence was the high level of political organization, the availability of arms, and the broadest organizational unity.

3. The prolonged nature of the struggle was evidenced in the several stages through which it passed and the concomitant shifts in tactics and strategy. The Nicaraguan experience illustrates the fact that revolution is a process requiring the gradual accumulation of forces, punctuated by decisive actions which focus on the essential weaknesses of the regime and mobilize previously uncommitted forces. The flexibility of the revolutionary leadership, reflected in its recognition of the specificities of the issues and problems facing urban/industrial organizations, was a necessary ingredient in laying the groundwork for mass organization. The fusion of neighborhood and factory struggles, and the dialectical interplay of both, clearly demonstrated the critical importance of combining political action in the neighborhoods and at the work place. The necessity of pursuing both extra-legal and legal struggle provided both the military and the mass organizations that were required to sustain insurrectionary activity. Tactical unity and organizational independence facilitated the maximum application of pressure at critical moments, and at the same time allowed the revolutionary movement to raise the level of struggle beyond immediate issues to broader systemic problems.

4. The insurrectionist activities of the Tercerista faction served to detonate action, while the GPP and TP groups contributed to the building of the mass organizations that sustained the struggle. The *audacity* of the former and the *organizational skills* of the latter were complementary—each requiring the other for the making of a successful revolution.

5. For a time the mass movement was under bourgeois leadership, but it was unable to maintain control once the masses were mobilized. The FSLN displaced the FAO between February and September 1978—a period in which the process increasingly took the form of mass armed struggle. Though displaced, the bourgeoisie have not been eliminated from the scene, and the question remains whether they will be able to retake through political manipulation what the masses have won militarily.

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6. The participation of self-directed and organized mass organizations in the uprisings of September 1978 and especially in those of May-June 1979 attests to the fact that the masses are not looking toward a bourgeois-democratic state dominated by notable personalities, but rather are struggling for a regime which allows direct mass participation in the process of transformation.

7. The mass organizations which were instruments of struggle against the dictatorship can also be the instruments for "reconstruction." Even before the arrival of the Junta, the mass organizations took a leading role in the organization of production and distribution, and in the administration of neighborhoods. The CDCs, the CDTs, and the militia were the parallel power before Somoza's fall and could serve the same function with the Junta, *thus ensuring that the revolution continue uninterrupted.*

Contradictions and the Transitional Period: The Government, the Masses, and the Strategy of the United States

The Provisional Government, or Junta, is made up predominantly of personalities from the nonrevolutionary forces, only two of the five members having direct contact with armed insurrectionary movements. Alfonso Robelo represents business groups and collaborated closely with the U.S. effort at mediation with Somoza. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro is the widow of assassinated newspaper editor and former Conservative Party leader Pedro Joaquín Chamorro. Sergio Ramírez, considered a centrist liberal democrat, is a member of Los Doce (The Twelve), which supported the idea of a broad popular anti-Somoza front including the Sandinistas. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, the representative from the FSLN, is associated with the social-democratic Tercerista faction. Moisés Hassán Morales, a member of the MPU, is also an FSLN leader, associated with the revolutionary GPP faction.

A Council of State has been established, with which the Junta shares legislative powers. This organ is made up of 33 members, drawn from the FSLN, the FAO, and business, civic, religious and other bodies. According to my calculations, the left—counting social democrats and other reformers—numbers

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15 and the right 18; by a more rigorous definition, the left has 6 representatives, the center 19 and the right 8.

On the evidence of the initial twelve names announced, the Cabinet appears to be overwhelmingly controlled by liberal professionals: five posts went to the liberal-left affiliates of Los Doce, three to conservatives (including the former Somocista hardliner Larios, who was named the Minister of Defense) and three to Sandinista supporters (two of them from the Tercerista faction). The only crucial post held by the left-wing of the FSLN is that of Minister of Interior, to which Tomás Borge (of the GPP faction) was named. Clearly there is a marked discrepancy between the program and composition of the Junta, Cabinet, and State Council and the degree of mobilization, organization, and demands of the masses. While these political bodies waver between the center-left and center-right, the combatants are clearly in a revolutionary mood.

A mixed economy is projected: the former Somoza properties will make up the public sector, there will be a private sector, and another with joint investments. The national army will be made up of Sandinista fighters, "honest" National Guardsmen, and others. Agrarian reform will be based on the expropriation of Somoza-owned plantations and those owned by his supporters; apart from that, only land which is not being cultivated will be expropriated. An independent non-aligned foreign policy is stipulated.

Under these institutional arrangements and with this configuration of forces, the transitional period is likely to be dominated by petty bourgeois democrats supported by the social democratic Tercerista faction of the FSLN, while the left (GPP and TP factions) avoids challenges to power and acts as the loyal opposition. This approach is based on a mechanical stage-theory of revolution which subordinates the mass struggle to the diplomatic needs of "reconstruction" and consolidation of the anti-dictatorial state—in other words the construction of a bourgeois state and society without Somoza.

Nevertheless, this regime will be unable to solve any of the fundamental problems of the masses. On the contrary, in order to curry favor with its outside benefactors, it will have to demobilize the masses, limit change, and demand sacrifices, while

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restructuring the old class society—thus provoking mass protest. In these circumstances, the petty bourgeois regime will resort to the old ploy of attacking counter-revolutionary forces of the extreme right and left. But in effect this will be a transitional regime facilitating a drift to the right—in much the same way that the Soares regime in Portugal was used as a means of stopping the revolutionary drift to the left and eventually discarded for an outright rightist regime. After taking several initial radical measures, such as abolishing the institutional legacy of the Somoza regime and nationalizing the banks (emptied by their owners), the regime may well end up by collaborating with imperial financial capital to begin "reconstruction"—mortgaging the revolutionary future in order to cope with the immediate needs of business and of the local treasury. This hypothesis is compatible with past experiences of bourgeois governments elsewhere in Latin America (and even with the behavior of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie): their opposition, including armed actions, culminated in capitulation to imperialism and its internal representatives. There is no reason to believe that the new democratic and social democratic spokespeople for the mixed-economy will end up any differently.

Independently of the good intentions of the governmental figures, efforts at forming a reform capitalist "mixed economy" have certain objective limits: foreign aid is dependent on the nature and direction of socio-economic change, arms control, demobilization of the masses, and the reconstitution of a bourgeois social order. The capitalist forces in the "mixed economy" depend on finance, imports, credits, investments from abroad—all premised on disarming the masses and creating a new democratic, capitalist state. This perspective has substantial and articulate representation in each of the new political organs established at the top. Only the combative masses are under-represented.

The problem with the left (the GPP and the TP) is that it has imposed limitations on itself which foreclose the option of establishing a regime based on the emerging organs of those local popular-power groups which played such an important role in promoting the revolution. Indeed, one of the great ironies of the insurrectionary war was the fact that Somoza blocked the

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advance of the social democratic Tercerista-led columns on the Southern Front, while the GPP, TP, and left-Tercerista groups gained control of all the major cities, thus vastly expanding their influence among the masses, politicizing and organizing the organs of popular power. Yet at this crucial transitional point the left appears to be conceding the leadership of this stage of "reconstruction" to the petty bourgeois democrats, thus missing the historical opportunity to convert mass military support into the means for a socio-economic transformation. Lacking a clear sense of political rulership, they have taken a back seat to the bourgeoisie.

The transitional period is characterized by a shift in the triangular bloc of contending forces. In the past, Somoza was at the apex of the triangle; at the base were (1) the popular bloc and (2) the bourgeois reformists, represented by the coalition known as the FAO. In the post-Somoza period the bourgeois reformists in the Junta and Council of State are at the apex; at the base are (1) the revolutionary left, i.e., the radicalized masses, and (2) the social democrats.

For the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, the overthrow of Somoza spelled the end of the revolution—the time for law, order, work, and capitalist reconstruction. For sectors of the left and the radicalized combatants, the overthrow of Somoza was seen as a prelude to creating a new egalitarian participatory society—socialism. While the bourgeois reformers sought Somocismo without Somoza, the bourgeois revolutionaries want capitalism (the mixed variety) without Somocismo, and the social revolutionaries want neither capitalism nor Somocismo.

U.S. Policy in the Transitional Period

U.S. policy in the present, post-Somoza conjuncture is oriented toward strengthening the right, neutralizing the center, and isolating the left. Carter administration policy evolved through several phases, reflecting the changing correlation of forces in Nicaragua, the United States, and Latin America. During the first phase, roughly 1976 to September 1978, the Carter administration criticized and prodded the Somoza regime to liberalize its policies; under pressure from the human

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rights groups in the United States, Washington cut off military aid and sought to encourage Somoza to make concessions to the business-conservative opposition. The second phase, from October through December 1978, involved U.S. "mediation" efforts between Somoza and his conservative opponents—essentially a response to the massive uprising of September and the growing radicalization of the population. The purpose was to evolve a scheme to allow Somoza to step down in favor of a conservative-business coalition, while preserving the National Guard and the rest of the coercive apparatus. Phase three, between January and April 1979, saw the United States discontinue pressure on Somoza, apparently believing that the threat of mass insurrection had passed and that the conservative-business opposition was impotent by itself to change the regime: the United States was clearly more concerned with repressing the FSLN than with ousting Somoza. Phase four began with the May-July 1979 insurrection, the popular takeover of almost all major cities and the precipitous victory of the Sandinista forces.

Lacking sufficient internal support for direct intervention, Washington had sought intervention by a joint military expeditionary force from the Organization of American States (OAS) to prevent an FSLN victory, to replace Somoza with a conservative pro-U.S. coalition, and to preserve the military-administrative apparatus of the Somoza regime (Somocismo without Somoza). The OAS vote against the U.S. motion reflected the convergence of ultra-right-wing and liberal interests. For the military regimes, the precedent of a U.S.-initiated intervention against the right-wing Somoza regime carried a potential future threat to their own rule; if it became necessary, someone like Pinochet could reason, U.S. imperialism could replace him with a conservative civilian such as Frei. Thus in the interests of its own self-preservation, the Latin American right invoked the "right of self-determination," even though, ironically, their regimes were products of violations of that very principle. On the other hand, the liberals, social democrats, and nationalists (Panama, Costa Rica, the Andean countries) had developed links with their counterparts within the Nicaraguan Junta and the Tercerista faction, and opposed U.S. intervention as a threat to what they perceived to be an emerging center-left govern-

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ment. Their approach was to *channel resources exclusively to the nonrevolutionary anti-Somoza forces engaged in the armed struggle in order to gain hegemony from within.*

Phase five followed the failure of the OAS-direct military attempt. Washington sought to trade off the resignation of Somoza for a coalition regime of far-rightwingers, including the National Guard and members of Somoza's Liberal Party. Utilizing Costa Rica and Venezuela—material supporters and allies of the FSLN—as pressure points, Washington attempted to save the state apparatus by sacrificing its titular head. This approach was to be strengthened by direct U.S. military pressure through troop landings in northern Costa Rica. This policy failed as the FSLN military leadership categorically rejected the plan and forced the Junta to do likewise, while the Costa Rican legislature repudiated its executive's decision and gave the United States 48 hours to clear out.

Phase six: having exhausted all possibilities of excluding the Sandinistas from military victory or of saving the Somoza apparatus, the United States shifted ground and adopted the position of the Latin American liberals and social democrats, pressuring the Junta to choose a predominantly liberal cabinet, including a former Somoza officer as Minister of Defense. In addition, the United States insisted on protecting the National Guard as a potential counter-revolutionary reserve force for the future, and as proof to other client military regimes that Washington maintains concern for their ultimate welfare. The new U.S. policy is oriented toward working through the Junta during this transitional period, using emergency and reconstruction aid to strengthen the conservative-business bloc, and building bridges toward the center. The new power bloc includes substantial parts of the political superstructure (Junta, cabinet, etc.), the United States, and the liberal Latin American states. This bloc will, as a primary objective, move to demobilize and disarm the population, tying foreign aid to what will euphemistically be described as "bringing back order." Every effort will be made to limit the organs of popular power to local, immediate, productionist tasks, while national middle- and long-term political-economic decision-making will be concentrated at the top. Accompanying this attempt to establish the foundations of

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a new bourgeois state, every effort will be made to restrict socio-economic changes, especially those initiated from below ("ultra-leftism," as it surely will be called), that do not conform to the pre-ordained plans laid out by the technocrats of the Junta. Special care will be taken to protect U.S. investments (a prerequisite for foreign aid) and all reform efforts will be concentrated on the former Somoza-owned properties, thus deflecting attention from other sources of exploitation. Factories and latifundios seized in the struggle and claimed by conservative businessmen will be returned according to the Junta's Plan of Reconstruction and Development—which at no point refers to classes, let alone class struggle. Finally, every effort will be made to defuse the revolutionary impact of Nicaragua on the rest of Central America—including restrictions on support to popular revolutionary groups. By supporting the Junta and using the aid program to establish linkages with the new administration, Washington hopes to apply "salami tactics"—slicing off supporters, isolating the revolutionary tendency in Sandinismo, and undermining the functioning of the combative committees in the cities controlled by the GPP, TP, and radicalized Terceristas. U.S. policy is biding its time—getting a foothold, keeping up the pressure, and avoiding a precipitous and untimely confrontation with revolutionary Sandinismo, which currently enjoys the widest support among most sectors of the population. In the aftermath of the demise of Somoza and Somocismo, we see a dual structure: a political superstructure largely recruited and oriented by the petty bourgeoisie, and an amorphous mass base fresh from a revolutionary upheaval. What is not evident is any clear indication that this potential cleavage will lead anywhere, as there is a clear absence among the left Sandinistas of any effort to organize and centralize local popular-power committees at the national level. Confrontations between the bourgeois superstructure and the militants could emerge over issues such as "order" and disarming the popular committees; over the devolution of occupied property;* or over the question

* During the armed struggle many firms were taken over by the workers after the owners fled. The provisional government apparently has plans to return many of these plants to those previous owners who had not been Somoza collaborators.

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of whose authority is to be obeyed—the committees, the Junta, or the FSLN, assuming that the latter eventually separates itself from some of the liberal-democratic positions.

Herein lies the most difficult question: Which way will Sandinismo turn, now that its unifying anti-Somocismo theme is gone? Will the FSLN transform itself into a party? Can it sustain its unity or will it break up along with the new societal polarization? And if it becomes a party and remains cohesive, can it convert military to political power, local popular rule to national rule, a political to a social revolution?

Conclusion

Bourgeois writers and spokespeople emphasize the destruction, the economic losses, the costs, and the need to seek capitalist support for reconstruction, development, and so on, minimizing the tremendous creative efforts that have emerged internally from the struggle and given birth to popular mass organizations, which, in addition to carrying out the bulk of the fighting, also organized neighborhoods, production, distribution, etc. They are now relegated to the "war period," to be set aside in the new stage of reconstruction, where the demands of financial support require capital collaboration and the demobilization of these "destabilizing" organs of mass struggle. Some of the left sees a need to link the mass organizations that made possible the military victory with the necessary tasks of reconstruction, through continuous mobilization of the masses and by deepening and extending the revolutionary process from city to national levels, from politico-military to socio-economic tasks. Such an enterprise requires the organization of a new government that *grows up from below.*

The political future of Nicaragua will be determined by the relationship between the mass organizations, product of the revolutionary war, and the bourgeois Junta and its external allies, who are setting their sights on consolidation of their current position; between policies derived from a vision of a liberal political economy and those rooted in the class demands of the masses; between a U.S. government intent on strengthening local and international capital and the forces on the left that are seeking to continue the revolution uninterruptedly. Within

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the FSLN, the burning question is: What class content will define the rather ambiguous Sandinista formula? Will it be bourgeois nationalist or proletarian socialist? This will depend largely on whether the left itself is clear in moving the masses toward a social revolution.

GLOSSARY

CDC: Comité de Defensa Civil; Civil Defense Committee. Mass organization established throughout the liberated cities during the final insurrectionary phase, to organize civilian defense against mortar and bombing attacks and to aid in the distribution of food and medicine, as well as to provide support to the military fighters.

CDT: Comité de Defensa de Trabajadores; Workers Defense Committee. Committees of workers formed in the liberated areas during the final insurrectionary period to provide military supplies and to organize and recruit military forces from the industrial proletariat.

FAO: Frente Amplio de Oposición; Broad Opposition Front. An anti-Somoza organization controlled and directed by the bourgeoisie; it included businessmen, center-right political parties, and one faction of the pro-Moscow Communist Party. Its policy was generally to collaborate with the United States in ejecting Somoza and preventing a Sandinista military victory.

Foco theory: The notion that military action by guerrilla detachments would generate mass support and ignite a revolutionary uprising. Its main exponent was Régis Debray in *Revolution in the Revolution?*

FSLN: Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional; Sandinista Front of National Liberation. The revolutionary organization that organized and led the anti-Somoza struggle. Named for Augusto Sandino (see below).

GPP: Guerra Popular Prolongada: Prolonged Popular War faction of the FSLN. Oldest of the three factions, it was oriented toward rural guerrilla warfare and a war of attrition. Cautious and critical of strategic alliances with bourgeois forces, it has been a strong supporter of the Cuban Revolution.

La Prensa: The leading democratic, capitalist, anti-Somoza newspaper. It was edited by Pedro Joaquín Chamorro until his assassination on Somoza's orders, on January 10, 1978.

Los Doce: The Twelve. A group of notables—clergy, businessmen, and professionals—who opposed Somoza and advocated the replacement of Somoza by a coalition government including the Sandinistas.

MPU: Movimiento Pueblo Unido; United People's Movement. Founded in April 1978 as a coalition of trade unions, and women's, student, and neighborhood organizations in a nationalist, anti-Somoza front.

National Guard: The main military force supporting the Somoza dictatorship; organized by the United States during its intervention in Nicaragua in the 1930s and maintained by Somoza as his personal protectors.

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Provisional Government: The regime now governing Nicaragua pending free elections. A coalition including liberal businessmen, social democratic intellectuals, and guerrilla leaders.

Sandino, Augusto: Leader of a guerrilla army which successfully resisted U.S. occupation between 1927-1933; assassinated by Anastasio Somoza Garcia, the father of the recently deposed Anastasio Somoza Debayle, in 1934.

Tercerista faction of the FSLN: "Third Force." Supported alliances with the bourgeoisie and focused on the immediate organization of urban insurrectionary activity. It is reported to have strong ties with the socialist parties of Europe and with the social democrats of Central and South America. Organized in 1975, it has substantial support and more financial resources than the other factions.

TP: Tendencia Proletaria; Proletarian Tendency, faction of the FSLN. Smallest of the three tendencies, oriented toward organizing the working class, proposes political organization as the basis for insurrectionary struggle. Critical of alliances with the bourgeoisie and of precipitous insurrectionary activity.

They thought they would live forever and would always be in power
and put their names on their lands
on all the property they stole
They removed the names of the cities
that they might be named after them
Their statues were in every square
and now who names them?
Their bronze statues were demolished
their bronze plaques were torn away
Now their palace is a mausoleum. . . .

— From "Psalm 48"
by Ernesto Cardenal, translated by Robert Márquez

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CHINA'S UNINTERRUPTED REVOLUTION

BY MARK SELDEN

Thirty years after liberation, the Chinese people are searching for new ways to defeat their old adversaries: the twin legacies of poverty and feudalism. Most of the original leadership generation—including Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung), Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai), Zhu De (Chu Teh), and, yes, Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-chi) and Lin Biao (Lin Piao)—are no longer at the helm. A new phase of socialist modernization is at hand requiring a strategic combination of social and technological change in order to liberate the productive forces and ensure their self-reliant development. China will need to be forthright in pursuing such goals as the reduction of major differences in income and opportunity, the economic advance of the countryside, and a better livelihood for all the people. And it will need to be cautious, too, in adapting the tools of foreign technology. Can social change contribute to accelerated economic and technological progress? Is the revolution dead? Answers to these questions lie embedded in China's past; an uninterrupted revolution lasting 30, or even 130 years.

"The Chinese people have stood up," Mao Zedong proclaimed at the founding of the People's Republic in 1949.

Mark Selden is the author of the recently published Monthly Review Press book *The People's Republic of China: A Documentary History of Revolutionary Change,* and other works, including *The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China.*

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China's century-long resistance to foreign encroachment, capped by a successful people's war, demonstrated that colonized and exploited peoples could attain national liberation—a potential soon to be fulfilled in other countries as well. Winning state power, however, was only the first phase of the revolution. The next was to strike at the historical roots of poverty and to construct an independent nation on foundations of social justice and abundance.

What lay behind this reversal in the logic of world power? How could a predominantly peasant nation prevail against the advanced technology and armaments of the Japanese conquerors and later of the U.S.-backed Guomindang (Kuomintang) forces? In China, people's war established a working unity between the demands of the peasantry and the Communist party. It also initiated a mutual learning process: human consciousness and institutions were transformed as wartime conditions became a testing ground for egalitarian and participatory social relations rooted in self-reliant communities.

To be sure, there continued to be international constraints, both before and after liberation. Pearl Harbor and the subsequent U.S.-Japanese clash in the Pacific War reshaped the strategic environment within China. Now, however, thanks to the emergence of a Communist-led rural resistance movement, the Chinese could take advantage of these cleavages to restore independence and territorial integrity as well as to initiate revolutionary change. People's war involved not only the creation of a broad-based nationwide resistance to foreign invasion but also an attack on the most flagrant injustices in China's own disintegrating society, where the wealthy few lived off the misery of the many, and periodic natural or man-made disasters consigned millions to death by starvation, disease associated with malnutrition, and war. The peasants rallied to support the national resistance when a people's government of their own creation successfully defended their subsistence, welfare, and right to till the soil against the privileges of the rich and powerful minority. It took more than 20 years, but the Communist-led resistance finally shattered the dreams of foreign conquerors and overturned the landlord system. The people had begun to reshape society.

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Revolutionary change required organic bonds of trust and mutuality between leadership and people, based on the ability to deliver the goods, to serve and be one with the people. "All empty words are useless," Mao once said. "We must give the people visible material wealth." The task of the party and army was not only to achieve military victory, but to contribute to the general welfare. This dual goal—the elimination of all forms of foreign or domestic oppression and the pursuit of material abundance for all—forms a continuous theme in Chinese history: from the people's war of the 1940s, through the land revolution and initial stages of socialist transition in the 1950s, and finally to the present striving for socialist modernization and the flowering of democracy and culture.

"China's agrarian system is unjust in the extreme," stated the basic land law of 1947, signaling the onset of the second major epoch of revolutionary change. "The agrarian system of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation is abolished. The agrarian system of 'land to the tillers' is to be realized." Realized by whom and by what means? Not just by administrative fiat or the exercise of state power but also, and most significantly, by the poor, unpropertied peasant majority, acting in concert to gain mastery over the land.

The land revolution, however, was part of a larger challenge. As the 1950 law emphasized, it was "to set free the rural productive forces, develop agricultural production, and thus pave the way for new China's industrialization." In large part it was successful. Not only did the land revolution eliminate glaring injustices and stimulate productive energies, but its expropriation of landlord wealth freed a substantial surplus for investment by the peasantry and the state. Resources previously squandered by a parasitic and corrupt elite could now be used to feed the people and revitalize the long-stagnant rural economy.

The First Plan gave industrialization top priority. China's urban industrial strategy drew heavily on the earlier experience of the Soviet Union, borrowing its blueprints for growth. It also borrowed vital Soviet technical expertise to supplement its own native initiative and managed, despite the U.S.-led economic blockade, to produce some impressive results: rapid eco-

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nomic growth centered on large-scale heavy-industrial complexes. But at a cost. The plan drained the countryside of resources in order to provide the food and surplus needed for industrialization and to fulfill expanding foreign-exchange requirements. All the rural population got in return was the distant promise of consumer goods and tractors—once a heavy industrial base had been created, three five-year plans hence.

What role would the countryside play in this transitional society—industrializing, yet still predominantly agrarian? Since agriculture remained China's chief source of large capital, success or failure in the countryside would decisively affect the outcome of nationwide industrialization. Rural inequality had already been sharply reduced by the land revolution, together with government measures to restrict private speculation and institute an equitable system of taxation. Indeed, by the early fifties, China's leadership was envisioning the gradual, voluntary formation of agricultural cooperatives as part of a long-term program to effect the socialist transition and stimulate the rural economy.

This gradualist vision of transition was swept aside in the summer of 1955, when social forces erupted in the countryside and frustration was once again rife among the rural poor. Not only were millions of peasant cultivators hampered by drought and the paucity of good land, animals, and tools, but there were signs of a resurgence of class polarization. Some poorer families, unable to make ends meet, were forced to sell their newly-acquired land and hire out their labor. Moreover, the fragmented pattern of ownership, an historic legacy compounded by land redistribution, impeded water-conservation and irrigation programs that could have increased agricultural yield.

In the summer of 1955, Mao Zedong made his first decisive leadership intervention of the post-liberation period. In alliance with poor peasant militants he thrust aside the measured pace of social transformation associated with the First Plan and initiated accelerated rural cooperation. The sequence of the First Plan was turned on its head: cooperation would now *precede* the mechanization and modernization of agriculture, generating the necessary scale of farm and capital accumulation. Thanks to the heritage of mutual good will between party and

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peasantry, the first phase of this transition to cooperative land ownership was completed in one tumultuous year—a decade ahead of schedule. In 1956, China basically broke the link between private ownership of land and individual prosperity, replacing the earlier system with large-scale advanced cooperatives, often village-wide in scope. Moreover, in sharp contrast with state-imposed collectivization in the Soviet Union, this was accomplished peacefully, if not always smoothly, with the support of the peasant majority and without serious economic disruption. Industry, in the meantime, was completing its changeover to state ownership. In both city and countryside, then, the worker-peasant alliance stood the test of rapid transition to socialist ownership.

In just seven years, China had traversed the difficult terrain to socialist ownership of the means of production in the dual form of cooperatively owned farms and state-owned industries. The economic gains of this period, moreover, testified to the vitality of the new socialist system. The institutional foundations had been laid for a future in which poverty would be vanquished, common prosperity would prevail, and the full promise of communist society would finally be realized. Or so it appeared.

But the period of revolutionary change did not yield to calmer days of economic construction, as many people expected. Instead, China embarked on the Great Leap Forward. People's communes were formed, vastly extending the scope and conception of the cooperatives, while bold—if seriously flawed—efforts were made to speed working people toward a position of mastery over workplace and society, and to accelerate economic and technological development. The people's commune created an institutional basis for large-scale capital construction, the greening of the countryside, and the expansion of education and social services; it also helped initiate a rural industrialization process through which the whole role of peasant and countryside would ultimately be redefined. This new strategy employed many levels of technology, both intermediate and advanced, and transferred trained personnel to the countryside, thus challenging an old premise of modernization: that progress is an urban phenomenon requiring ultra-sophisticated technology,

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while rural areas can contribute only in the agricultural sphere. Another innovative feature of this period was the attempt to provide child-care facilities and public dining halls, thereby facilitating the entry of urban and rural women into the productive labor force and the mainstream of political and cultural life.

The Great Leap Forward was a turning point, advancing and clarifying goals that would henceforth be central to China's socialist development. Particularly important was the task of moving systematically to eliminate the "Three Great Differences"—that is, the inequalities dividing the city and countryside, workers and peasants, mental and manual labor. But the Great Leap also gave rise to the nation's most acute economic and political crisis. The communes failed to measure up to the utopian expectations raised at the peak of the movement; indeed, for many peasants in more prosperous units, communization meant the loss of hard-won resources to higher administrative units outside their villages (Had the major locus of class struggle shifted from individual families to the level of teams and communes, mountain and plain regions, city and countryside?) while such hastily conceived schemes as indigenous steelmaking not only failed to produce a usable product but drained needed labor power from the fields and wasted precious resources. The rural collective economy teetered at the brink of collapse and the specter of starvation once again haunted large areas of the countryside, undermining confidence in the new cooperative and communal institutions. The post-Leap economic crisis, intensified by the break with the Soviet Union and a succession of natural disasters, also brought a crisis in leadership—a rupture in the remarkable unity that had prevailed, despite policy differences, over a period spanning the national liberation movement, the Sino-Soviet alliance, the Korean War, and the early years of the socialist transition.

Do mass movements that challenge the political and economic status quo really provide the impetus for socialist modernization and growth, as well as contributing to the possibility of a new and more egalitarian social order? Our brief analysis of the Anti-Japanese Resistance, the land revolution, and the birth of the cooperatives suggests that they could and did. But

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does the absence of vocal popular movements and intense conflict mean revolutionary torpor and the monopolization of power by an entrenched bureaucracy? This was certainly the tendency in the Soviet Union, as Mao correctly discerned in the early sixties. "A ten-thousand-league journey begins where you are standing," the chairman observed at the time. "But if you look only at your feet without giving thought to the future, then the question is, what is left of revolutionary ardor?"

Mao was more sensitive than most to the fine line between socialism and the tempting capitalistic rewards of individual prosperity—the goals of "one spouse, one country house, one automobile, one piano, one television." But it is utterly wrong to suggest, as do some of his admirers in the West, that Mao was an advocate of revolutionary asceticism or a communism of shared poverty. In fact, he never wavered in the conviction that communism promised a rich material life for all people. The point he wanted understood, particularly by the party and the youth, was that if China's advance toward communism was to continue, the goods and opportunities yielded by higher levels of productivity must be made available to everyone. In aspiring socialist societies, with party and state playing decisive economic and political roles, it is all too easy for egalitarian principles to coexist with pockets of privilege, based not on private wealth but on official position. Yet this central problem of socialist transition had never really been confronted by earlier revolutions.

Such issues would be vigorously addressed after 1966, in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. From the perspective of the early sixties, however, it is important to emphasize another point, somewhat neglected by Mao in his later years: when "revolutionary" change must be imposed from above because it is at odds with popular needs and perceptions, it is doomed to failure. It was the recognition of precisely this point, summed up by Mao in the principles of the mass line, that had enabled the party to spearhead earlier popular movements for national liberation and revolutionary change. Important elements of the Great Leap did mesh with popular demands—in 1958, for instance, the creation of public dining halls and day-care centers enabled millions of women to enter fully into the

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collective economy. But as the Leap gained momentum, cadres began to believe that the era of communist abundance was imminent and they escalated their demands accordingly. There was growing pressure for instant technological and institutional change, with scant regard for the limits imposed by material conditions and popular consciousness. A single example will suffice: the 1958 harvest was at its peak when some 100 million peasants, at the behest of the party, marched off to make iron in indigenous furnaces. Nearly all the furnaces failed, shut down within a matter of months, but by that time it was too late to harvest the abandoned crops. Such abortive experiments were fatal to the credibility of commune enterprise, while in 1960 horrendous weather and the withdrawal of Soviet technicians brought new pressures to bear on the economy. When the bubble burst, China entered a great depression.

The post-Leap economic collapse put a severe strain on collective institutions that were still in their infancy, and the result was a resurgence of the individual economy in the early sixties. Yet the communes, though gravely weakened, did not disintegrate: villages throughout China continued the search for forms appropriate to local conditions and the level of productive forces, hoping to reinvigorate the collectives and stimulate economic growth.

The battles of the Cultural Revolution were fought predominantly in the cities, and the principal combatants were not peasants but students, workers, and the political elites of the party, state, and army. Nevertheless, one of the struggle's primary goals was to redefine urban-rural relations by strengthening the position of the countryside and peasantry.

Viewed from a developmental perspective, the Cultural Revolution marked a new drive to eliminate inequalities and spur decentralized, self-reliant economic growth, while training a generation of youth committed to continuing the revolution. Over the course of ten years, it shored up the tenuous cooperative foundations of the collective economy; achieved breakthroughs in rural industrialization and mechanization, thus providing the firm technical and economic foundation that had been lacking in the development projects of the Great Leap era; and made strides toward adequate low-cost cooperative

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medical care and the extension of education throughout the countryside. And it was partly as a result of such gains that this period showed significant if uneven economic growth.

Viewed from the perspective of Marxism, China during the Cultural Revolution became the first nation seriously to confront bureaucratism, elitism, and routinization—problems to which societies in the throes of socialist transition (let alone one with the world's oldest bureaucratic tradition) are particularly susceptible. Building on the vision and practical lessons of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution sought to devise workable means to narrow the differences between city and countryside, worker and peasant, mental and manual labor, and above all to extend the power of working people over the workplace and society as a whole.

But at the same time the Cultural Revolution left China a legacy of division and a galaxy of old and new problems. Today, modernization efforts are still plagued by aspects of this heritage: the creation of a Mao cult and the ritualization of politics and culture; the formation of warring cliques whose differences (real and imagined) degenerate into violence and paralyze the political process; the gutting of higher education, research, and culture, and the resulting dearth of scientists, intellectuals, and artists; the tendency to move prematurely to higher levels of ownership and advanced forms of income distribution. These errors, some of them throwbacks to China's feudal tradition, were particularly acute at the highest levels of the political system and among intellectual youth organized as Red Guards. Nor will such deeply rooted problems find a quick or easy solution.

As the People's Republic enters its fourth decade, we can observe a certain continuity between its current priorities—the search for unity in the service of modernization, effective modes of cooperation, and expanded democratic rights—and those of earlier periods of revolutionary change. Perhaps the most persistent element of all has been the drive to defeat the legacy of poverty, to achieve a common prosperity that will lay the material foundations for an advanced socialist society. This is no easy task, yet the magnitude and complexity of the economic problem was too often obscured by the inflated political rhetoric

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of the Cultural Revolution era. To be sure, China's overall agricultural performance has been highly creditable. With 50 percent more people and 20 percent less arable land than India, for example, China produces 40 percent more food per capita and, most important, distributes it far more equitably. Nevertheless, the labor of approximately three fourths of the work force is required to feed the population.

Take the North China model village of Wugong, which I visited in 1978. The last 20 years have made this a prosperous place: per-capita income has tripled, bringing with it such benefits as adequate cooperative medical care for all, universal education through junior middle-school level, and a flowering of local culture. In the last dozen years, 70 percent of all families have built themselves attractive brick homes (designed to withstand a seven-point shock on the Richter scale, I was told—a vital precaution in this earthquake-prone region), and a program to reconstruct the entire village is well advanced.

The fact remains, however, that despite progress in scientific farming, mechanization, electrification, and local industry, the predominant occupation of Wugong's 2,500 villagers is the intensive year-round garden farming of 600 acres. In terms of scale, this is roughly equivalent to a modest family farm in Illinois. As far as output is concerned, one day's labor on an efficient mechanized American farm easily nets 5,000 pounds of grain—500 times the size of comparable Chinese figures. And the labor of five Chinese farmers is required to feed one city dweller, in contrast to the hundred people—with vastly higher consumption levels—provided for by one American farmer.

Note that these facts are in no way a reflection of low per-acre yields in Chinese agriculture. Rather, they are principally a product of the severe constraints imposed by material reality—a vast population living on a slender arable land base. With this in mind, we can begin to glimpse the dimensions of the central economic problem implied by modernization: on the one hand, there are one billion Chinese to be fed; on the other hand, there are the goals of cooperative mechanization and industrialization—necessary not only to free people from the arduous toil now required to achieve high yields but also to overcome the gulf between city and countryside, worker and peasant.

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En route from China to Tokyo, I found myself riding through the fertile Japanese countryside near Narita airport. Suddenly, I was struck by one small element of modern technology, formerly taken for granted: the uses of cement in canals and other branches of capital construction. In China, through the immense efforts of millions of rural people working each year with hoes and carts, substantial progress has been made toward taming the rivers and turning large, disaster-prone regions into stable, high-yield farmland. But since much of the construction is based predominantly on mud or low-quality local cement, a serious flood—or even a minor one, in some cases—is enough to wash it away. Here we see what self-reliance can achieve despite the scarcity of such modern inputs as cement. But we can also observe why it is so urgent both to acquire modern technology—including costly foreign products—and apply it to the development of the countryside.

As in the earlier stages, distinctive new elements are now coming to the fore. The priorities of the current era include: the furthering of the democratic process; rebuilding the party and restoring its credibility, particularly among city people and intellectuals; "walking on two legs" to achieve simultaneous progress in high-level and intermediate technology, in city and countryside, in advanced regions and backward ones; and ensuring higher living standards among the rural population. Thus, for example, while the government continues to emphasize self-reliant development within reinvigorated rural cooperative units, for the first time since 1963 it has substantially increased the state purchasing price for agricultural commodities. It has also reduced the cost of fertilizer and fuel, while increasing the flow of farm machinery and consumer goods to rural areas. Just this year, in fact, with the scaling-down of certain overambitious heavy-industrial projects and the further rechanneling of resources to the countryside, there seems to be clearer recognition that the modernization of agriculture must take precedence if overall national programs are to succeed. But it is equally clear that there will be heavy competition for these scarce resources from the cities, from industry, and from the military.

Western understanding of the Chinese revolution was profoundly shaped by the Cultural Revolution, coinciding as it did

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with the American war against Vietnam and the rise of New Left movements. That bias was compounded by another—the fact that observers frequently based their conclusions not on the interaction between theory and practice, but on the mere interpretation of official pronouncements. The result was a wave of overblown expectations and hopes. China's internal contradictions were downplayed, as was the ever-present "mundane" reality it shared with all other developing nations: the task of feeding and clothing its people in a hostile world. In saying this, I intend no denigration of the Chinese effort to confront the central problem of uninterrupted revolution, i.e., the emergence of new privileged classes, associated with party and state during the transition period. I do contend, however, that significant policy continuities as well as internal contradictions were obscured by the intensely political language of the Cultural Revolution. Then, when the decade's end left sympathetic Westerners shorn of their illusions, there was bound to be a backlash—a highly cynical posture toward China's own prospects and those of socialism in general.

We turn now to an analysis of the modernization in China today—but in so doing, we also hope to clarify the limitations of some past policies, broaching certain subjects that have long been considered taboo. Take the poorer regions and less successful units, for example: How can self-reliance and state aid best be combined to resolve their problems? Or, to put it somewhat differently: What are the limits of self-reliance and the proper role of specialization if the goal is both to raise productivity and reduce inequality on a local, regional, and national level? In a related question, how can China attain a higher level of popular participation in national and local planning and the debate over the development priorities? Not since 1959 has there been open publication of production data or official recognition of shortcomings and problem areas, and this would certainly seem to be a vital first step, though hardly a guarantee of success.

Needless to say, serious problems and conflicts do exist today, just as they have in all earlier stages. The following examples, however, should be regarded as tendencies rather than established facts.

1. Making a fetish of technology, in the mistaken belief

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that anything advanced and/or foreign can perform miracles. The danger here is that in the event of economic crisis it is the countryside, not the technologically "superior" city, which will be drained of resources.

2. Caricaturing the all-too-real shortcomings and excesses of the Cultural Revolution, rather than getting at the truth through factual analysis. As a result, the full historical lessons of that complex period are never drawn, black-and-white analyses (now turned upside down) continue to predominate, and the lines of clique politics are redefined rather than laid to rest.

3. Using technological rationality as a means of favoring the elite and keeping worker-peasant aspirations within "reasonable" limits. Such limits do not include the longtime goal of mastery over workplace and society.

What about the future of the Chinese revolution and the socialist experiment? It will depend on the creation of effective, fully functional cooperative units, actively supported by the state and cities, which can stimulate productivity, improve the livelihood and prospects of their members, and devise democratic forms of political participation which reinforce community bonds. In the past, the fulfillment of such ideals has tested the ingenuity of China's leadership, and it will surely pose an equal challenge to the present regime. Likewise, the same forces that underlay China's century-long struggle for revolutionary change—the plight of the disadvantaged and their striving for a better life—can also be expected to shape the nation's future, turning it toward fresh and surprising directions.

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THE WORK EXPERIENCE AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN LITERATURE

BY DAVID HERRESHOFF

The division of society into antagonistic groups according to how people make their living leaves an indelible mark on language and literature. It marks, for instance, two familiar work proverbs: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and "A man works from sun to sun, a woman's work is never done."

These two proverbs show that the age and sex of workers have affected their feelings about work. "All work and no play" conveys opposition to unmitigated child labor in its assertion that depriving Jack of leisure stupefies him. "A man works from sun to sun" protests the injustice of any system of production which assigns women a social destiny of leisureless daily tedium in the performance of tasks yielding no sense of achievement. The two proverbs express the point of view of children and women who feel themselves to be victims of traditional work routines, and to a lesser extent they also express the view of men who sympathize with the victims of economic hierarchies of age and sex. And insofar as they continue to voice the experience of living generations, the two proverbs measure the persistence around the world of pre-capitalist, patriarchal modes of oppression.

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While the culture of capitalism preserves many pre-capitalist traits, capitalism itself tends to impersonalize the source of felt oppression. Those who first spoke out against being deprived of child's play or against being burdened with never-ending work probably recognized the source of the trouble as a familiar human being, a parent or a husband. Capitalism obscures the oppressor behind the oppression. The oppressor becomes a spook haunting the oppressed in the public marketplace. The oppressed feel that capricious fortune or mysterious bad luck has subjected them to the market. Shakespeare conveys this feeling in his Sonnet 111. There, in a mood of aristocratic pretension, he complains that Fortune "did not better for my life provide / Than public means which public manners breed." Why could not Fortune have endowed him with an inherited income? Since Fortune did not, he has to live by selling his skills as actor and playwright to a mass audience. Living under the necessity undercuts his aspiration to be a gentleman and threatens to warp his character. "Thence comes it that my name receives a brand, / And almost hence my nature is subdued / To what it works in, like a dyers hand." To live on the largesse of an aristocratic patron and to write sonnets for the patron and his friends, the poem suggests, is more honorable and more natural for the poet than to supply the mass market with plays and live from the receipts of the theater. It would preserve him from a degradation of reputation and artistic creativity which is comparable to the physical disfigurement of the dyer who stains his hands working at this trade.

The Bible is a good place to look for pre-capitalist attitudes toward work which persist in the literatures of peoples with a Judeo-Christian tradition; classical mythology and philosophy are others. A lyric outcry in the Song of Songs amply expresses a class attitude towards work as an involuntary and degrading experience. There, as with Shakespeare's Sonnet 111, the speaker complains of being thrust into an undesired occupation, but she, unlike the speaker in the sonnet, can identify her oppressor; it is not the market but her siblings. "Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me," the woman of the Song urges her lover. Behind that request is her assumption that a tan gotten from working out in the sun mars

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the beauty of her skin. It is the brand of the field hand, the identifying sign of servitude, just as stained fingers are the mark of the dyer. And her tanned skin is a sign of punishment as well. She explains that "my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." (Song of Songs, 1:6) The complaint of the woman of the Song of Songs expresses a leisure-class ideal of beauty. Associated with that ideal is the belief that doing manual work for a living is bad for any free human being, or deity even. The Greeks made their only working God, Hephaestus, a cripple limping around his forge and anvil, and Xenophon explains that manual labor put men out of condition for the liberal pursuits of citizens.

The leisure class ideal of beauty, while not accepting staining, tanning, or other visible signs of working for a living, encourages the display of obvious impediments to physical exertion. Examples from diverse cultures include veils, immobilizing obesity, bound feet for women, the long locks of cavaliers and hippies, high heels or platform shoes, and Mandarin-length fingernails. The ideal accommodates some traits in one context which it rejects in another. Thus a tan, when associated with sunbathing rather than with harvesting grapes, is transformed from a stigma into a charm. A stained skin, when it is acquired from a tattooer and not in a dyer's vat, is an ornament and no longer a sign of servitude. In general, to keep up the appearance of an easy life is to keep one's own vineyard.

Celebrators of the work ethic can find their proof texts in the Bible as easily as can advocates of genteel leisure. A rather bourgeois attitude towards woman's work appears in the Old Testament Proverbs. There the ideal woman is the splendid organizer of a patriarchal household who "worketh willingly with her hands . . . bringeth her food from afar . . . riseth while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household . . . planteth a vineyard . . . layeth her hands on the spindle . . . maketh fine linen and selleth it." (Proverbs 31:13-24) It would be out of character for such a woman, "whose price is above rubies," to complain about her complexion, or the roughness of her hands, or how vulgar it makes her feel to sell the products of her labor in the marketplace. Whether there would be any physical work

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left for the husband of this epitome of productivity to do around the house is unclear. Perhaps, in the performance of the never-done woman's work, she has freed him for a life of leisure, sitting in the gates of the city to study Scripture and render judgments.

There is also a point of view toward work in the Proverbs which transcends class, sex conflicts, and the conflicts between parents and children. It is a utopian, revolutionary view of disciplined work as a means to liberation from want and oppression. The indolent reader, having time on his hands because the busy housewife is attending to the economic tasks, is instructed to "go to the ant . . . and consider her ways, which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest." (Proverbs, 5:6-8) The ant in this vignette works rationally and with foresight rather than under the goad of immediate need. The reward is a life without taskmasters, without a slave-driving state, a life in which the workers are the free masters of themselves. This utopian anthill John Milton takes to be prophetic of a "just equality" at the messianic end of history. (*Paradise Lost*, Book III, lines 485-487) The celebration of self-disciplined work as a liberating activity is intended for the correction of male sluggards, for it is the assumed male reader who is invited to consider the ways of the ant and, by implication, to imitate her.

Contemplative antipathy to rational, foresightful work appears in the Sermon on the Mount. This is a third Biblical attitude toward work, distinct from aristocratic rejection and "bourgeois" celebration. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus attacks the Proverbial celebration of work when he urges his audience to "take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." The ant, with her timely provisioning in summer for winter nourishment, can not serve Jesus as illustrative model. Instead he offers spontaneous birds and sedate plants, the very antithesis of industriousness. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not

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arrayed as one of these." (Matthew 6:25-59) The Proverb asks the sluggard to consider the ant as a model of liberating industriousness, but Jesus tells his hearers to imitate undomesticated fauna and flora because they are idle, not industrious, and because they live for the day and are not anxiously working to make provision for the morrow. Since the needs of these living things for food and shelter and even ornament are divinely met without any sowing, reaping, spinning, or toiling, he advises the pious that it can be so for them too. Trusting in Providence, they can be improvident. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and . . . all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33) Industriousness is no mere indignity thrust upon a woman by angry big brothers as in the Song of Songs, or an outrage endured by a gentleman at the hands of capricious fortune, or a stingy patron as Shakespeare hints. Transcending all limitations of class, sex, or years, it is an impiety, the common human folly of all prisoners of anxiety, women as well as men. Jesus cares nothing for the Proverbial virtuous woman when he chides Martha for being too busy in her kitchen to pay attention to the sacred word. (Luke 10:40-42) Walt Whitman, a rather perfunctory praiser of work but an entirely inspired celebrator of lolling and loafing in the grass, is in this contemplative tradition when he identifies himself as one who "stands amused, complaisant, compassionating, idle, unitary," and when he thinks he "could turn and live with the animals, they are so placid and self-contained." ("Song of Myself," Sections 4 and 32)

The Sermon on the Mount and the Song of Songs seem to open up different routes to freedom from anxiety about whether one's clothing and shelter are sufficient. The world of the Song of Songs is a world of the full horn of plenty overflowing with comforting apples, promising grapes, aromatic spices—an ambiance of ample, sensuous leisure; in it the possibility of deprivation barely exists. It is a world which has not heard of the fall and the sentencing of the human race to life at hard labor. But the world of the Sermon on the Mount is quite otherwise. In it the wild things are living satisfactorily, their needs well met, but the human beings are trapped in the routines of anxious labor. The horn of plenty is not easily avail-

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able to them as it is to the personages of the Song of Songs. In its derogation of work and praise of carefree birds and flowers, the Sermon on the Mount seems to point to the ascetic life of voluntary poverty as the way of escape from anxiety. In this way whatever human needs there are shall be met, "all things shall be added." Thus the idle creatures are in the world to be learned from. To abstain from work is to avoid distractions from the contemplative search for the Kingdom of God. So it seems to Thoreau when, characterizing a contemplative day on the Walden shore, he writes: "This was sheer idleness to my fellow-townsmen, no doubt; but if the birds and flowers had tried me by their standard, I should not have been found wanting." (Henry David Thoreau, Walden, "Sounds," par. 2)

Up till now neither the Song of Songs' sensuous nor the Sermon on the Mount's ascetic way to freedom from anxiety has been practically available to most human beings. History has denied most of us large opportunities to do as we please, to live apart from the workaday world and indulge in hedonist games or pious contemplations. Humanity has had to reckon with the probability that staying alive requires long periods of sustained and arduous activity. This human condition appears sometimes to be sinister and sometimes wholesome. When sinister, it may give rise to fantastic apprehensions, for in hard times we are not only image-makers but fetish-makers as well. It may, for instance, occur to me that I have to work because I have offended some familiar or mysterious power: "My mother's children were angry with me," or perhaps fortune or some faceless spook was. In requiring me to work for a living, that power demonstrates hostility toward me. If something had not gone wrong, would I not be permitted to live leisurely and take all I need at nature's generous breast in the pastoral style of the lovers in the Song of Songs, or, you might say, from the hands of servitors whose workaday life I can ignore, despise, or sentimentalize because I am far removed from it by virtue of my class identity? I may personify that something which commands me to work as a taskmaster who exacts a price from me for clinging to life. Grunting and sweating like any beast of burden—not those idle and decorative creatures Jesus alludes to!—I grudgingly pay the price. Or perhaps I hopefully pay,

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for there is a chance my labor may expiate my offenses. This is the sinister side of the contradictory response to working, as alienated humanity has fantasized it in the ancient and continuing effort to make sense out of experience. This side of the work experience is embodied and struggled with in the best known and most influential of all myths, the myth of the garden and the fall.

There is also an agreeable side to the human response to working. People do find that it is gratifying to participate in the meeting of human needs. Alone or in association with other workers, I make something useful—it may or may not be a work of art. As I make this use-value I discover and verify my interior resources, the powers and talents which help define me as a separate person and member of a larger human group. In excellent working conditions what I make and the process of making it persuade me that I am a freely developing individual, exploring the qualities of the external world as I explore the range of my abilities. Excellent working conditions do not stimulate the human inclination to fetishize a supernatural taskmaster overseeing the work. Such fantasies are nurtured in adversity. In the best working conditions, when the work to be done provides an adequate test of my abilities, I keep my mind on what I am doing. Work under those conditions has the intensity of play where one must keep one's eye on the ball.

It appears that the two sides of the human response to working are a polar unity of opposing characteristics. At one pole cluster work's fatal, penitential characteristics and at the other pole its liberating and playful characteristics. One of these poles is uppermost in every working experience whose repulsive and attractive characteristics are not in equilibrium. Where one or the other pole dominates, I am either going to feel that a power beyond my control is teaching me a grimly punishing lesson while I work, or I am going to feel that I am playfully indulging my curiosity about and mastery over the external and interior worlds. As the repulsive and attractive characteristics of work come into balance, it becomes harder to take a stable, defined attitude toward the experience of working. Somewhere between the realms of pain and pleasure lies the region of boredom. Occupied with undemanding, routine labor, I fall into

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absent-mindedness. Like Ishmael on lookout at the masthead, I lose the sense of the special time and place I live in. The job occupies me without occupying my attention. Unless my fantasies entrance me, time hangs heavy on my hands. My mind does one thing and my hands another. If my fantasies do entrance me and if the work is dangerous, I risk killing or maiming myself or someone else on the job.

Literary representations of work, notably those based in myth and proverb, tend to emphasize work's frightful, degrading, and boring aspects. The sluggard, secure in his bed, imagines that to venture out into the world of work is to risk dismemberment. "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets!" he protests to the housewife who is trying to rouse him. (Proverbs 22:13) Work is doom for the woman for whom it is never done, as it is for Sisyphus in Hades. Or it may be a kind of Herculean, purgatorial sweating, exacted to make the sufferer worthy of admittance to the Elysian Fields. But that sanctuary for fugitives from the bondage of labor can prove to be a workless locus of eternal boredom, the kind of perpetual Sunday School which Mark Twain's Captain Stormfield discovers heaven to be. Still, dominant tradition says work is a curse.

"I accepted my bondage to the milk stool as proof of inherited punishment for Original Sin," writes a contemporary American about his rural childhood. The sentiment, however, is not unique to the time and place which inspired it. It might have been expressed in any generation any place, since myths have been pondered on and dairy cattle bred. Experiencing unavoidable drudgery, the child senses his permanent exile from a lost, alternative world. He continues: "I was sure that if Eve had not eaten that apple, Adam and his descendants would have lolled about in Eden with never a cow in sight." (Louis B. Wright, *New York Times,* October 3, 1974) This is a prevalent reading of the myth, a counterposing of an Eden of lolling idleness to a slavish fallen world of punishing effort. Expelled from Eden, Adam is sentenced to life at hard labor and Eve is sentenced to patriarchy and labor-pains. From there on the normal human condition, according to this interpretation, is one of continuing economic, social, and biological misery.

The interpretation is open to challenge, particularly from

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those who regard attributing omnipotence to a superhuman power as an unacceptable restriction of human potentiality. The logic of the challenge might be put this way. If the doctrine of Original Sin is false, then the original human beings have not bequeathed inescapable punishment to their descendants and oppressive labor is not a necessary condition of human life. Both transcendental idealists (believers in the divinity of humanity) and atheist materialists (who believe that whatever has been attributed to the gods belongs in truth to humanity) have made the challenge. The difference between the challengers is that for the materialists the challenge can only be made in a practical, world-changing way where the productive forces at the disposal of humanity are adequate for the abolition of poverty. This condition for the emancipation of labor has not been met up till now, whether in the USSR, China, or on the shore of Walden Pond. Idealists, on the other hand, have no regard for such limiting historical conditions. For them the challenge to drudgery might have been successfully made at any moment in history. It is timely, for them, to ask why human beings are so tame and to summon them to revolt against a slavish life. The inhabitants of Concord reminded Thoreau, when he considered their ways of making a living, of Hindu ascetics ritually humiliating themselves day by day. Why should this be so? It seemed to Thoreau to be a kind of mistake attributable to a lack of awareness in the people of his village of possible alternative lives. Hence his eagerness "to wake my neighbors up," as he says in his self-reliant epigraph to *Walden*. All slaves can come out of slavery right now, he affirms. "It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do." (*Walden*, "Economy," par. 90)

With this assertion Thoreau lifts the curse of hard labor from the shoulders of the race and professes faith in the immediate accessibility of an Eden of unalienated humanity. The Eden of his vision is not a paradise of idleness, though it affords plenty of time for contemplation. It is rather a place where people work playfully and play productively, a place where the line between the serious and the sportive is erased or at least obscured. We are to take it easy in this Eden but are not to be passive consumers of its delights.

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Thoreau stands in a revolutionary-utopian tradition of interpretation of the myth of the garden. The foremost representative of that tradition in English literature is John Milton. Writing when the capitalist mode of production was beginning to prevail, Milton saw the fall in the garden from a point of view uncongenial to the Protestant work ethic. Work, in Milton's account in *Paradise Lost*, was originally a slow-paced, amorous dressing and keeping of the garden. Then, unfortunately—it was fortunate only from the point of view of the Messiah who otherwise would have been out of work, with nothing to do in history—Eve gives way to guilt feelings about the style, tempo, and consequent low productivity of the work she and Adam perform; the onset of her guilt about work presages the temptation and the fall. Her fear is that she and Adam do not do enough work to deserve their food; they should earn it by accomplishing more. They would work more efficiently, she believes, if they would work in isolation from each other rather than cooperating (in the root sense of the term). The primitive organization of work which Eve guiltily criticizes and proposes to abandon is one in which the pair tend the garden together just hard and fast enough to work up an appetite for lunch, just enough to raise a light sweat and to appreciate a cooling breeze, but not enough to diminish their loving experience of associated labor. Eve and Adam debate their plan of work. When Eve deplores its inefficiency, Adam defends the original plan with the argument that human beings are not on earth to fulfill work quotas or to test their virtue by enduring isolation from one another. It is a sound argument but not a match for Eve's guilt-ridden determination to boost their labor efficiency. So they go to work in different parts of the garden and inevitably meet the mysterious challenge to human integrity one at a time, rather than in mutually supportive unity. They have succumbed to the alienating demon of efficiency before they taste the forbidden fruit. Afterwards they experience both an orgiastic sensuality and a mutual estrangement in rapid succession (*Paradise Lost,* IX, line 205 ff.); both experiences are products of the cult of efficiency. So history begins. Humanity is condemned to a world in which private property, the state, and hard work are necessary consequences of the fall. All these

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evils of civilization could have been avoided if only the ancestors of the race had been obedient to the God of freedom. Their disobedience lost us freedom, subjected us to necessity. This explanation, however, does not condone the existence of oppressive institutions. "Tyranny must be/ Though to the tyrant no excuse." (*Paradise Lost,* XII, lines 95-96) Milton has faith that, with superhuman effort, paradise, the just commonwealth, will be regained. He calls for struggle "to repair the ruins of our first parents" by learning to obey the God of freedom. (*Of Education,* par. 4) That struggle may take the form either of the patient witness of the martyr or of the violent outbreak against tyranny of the blood avenger—either Christ or Samson.

The shades of meaning which adhere to the word *work* and its synonyms testify that it is the grim, desperate, and unavoidable rather than the attractive aspects of work, which are uppermost in the minds of the speakers of our language and its relatives and antecedents. The word work itself is often positive or value-neutral in meaning, but around it cluster synonyms like labor, toil, pain, travail which speak of unwelcome sensations necessary to be endured. Thoreau approvingly observes that Sir Walter Raleigh translates a phrase of Ovid's, "experiensque laborum" as "enduring pain and cares" (*Walden,* "Economy," par. 5). The idea of sacred rituals of suffering of the sort Thoreau thought of when he watched people in Concord working may be present in *liturgy* and *orgy;* the same Greek root for work which they contain gives us *erg,* the value-free metric measure of quantities of work. *Penal* and *penitence* go back to another Greek root for work and suffering. The history of penal institutions bears witness to deep-seated feelings about work. Artists may take pains with their work and do labors of love, but the currency in which a convict is compelled to pay his debt to society is often work, and penitentiaries are frequently places of "corrective," "punishing" labor. Such descriptions of penal labor suggest that the penitentiary is a secular metamorphosis of the divine rod of correction. Before penitentiaries came into vogue, some states transported convicts to penal colonies to get work out of them as well as to get rid of them. Some still do, although a preference for purer forms of punishment in which the subject endures mental or physical pain but does no work

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is discernible in contemporary societies. Still, the traditional idea that work is punishment persists.

The long association of literature with leisure classes exempt from the necessity of providing themselves with food, shelter, and clothing has produced a representation of human experience in literature which neglects, ignores, or patronizes people at work. Thoreau notes that

> there is little or nothing to be remembered written on the subject of getting a living; how to make getting a living not merely honest and honorable, but altogether inviting and glorious; for if *getting* a living is not so, then living is not. One would think, from looking at literature, that the question has never disturbed a solitary individual's musings. Is it that men are too much disgusted with their experience to speak of it? ("Life without Principle," par. 15)

When he wrote this, Thoreau had already broken decisively with the tradition that work is a disgusting subject and had written memorably, in *Walden,* on the subject of getting a living. He develops in that book his understanding that the quality of life is dependent on the way an individual makes a living and that the study of work is the study of human culture. Culture of course changes through time. *Walden* is in large part a result of Thoreau's study, an experimental reenactment of transitional events in humanity's economic history. Thoreau, in his approach to economic history, is perhaps more the historical materialist than is usually assumed. In any case he and Marx were on the same track at the same time. In 1844, the year before Thoreau went to live at Walden, Marx began to see "the history of industry" as "the open book of man's essential powers, the exposure to the senses of human psychology."*

I start from the assumption that "the history of industry" can enrich and complicate our understanding of literature and that Marxist literary criticism can make good use of that history. For Marxism the most important energies for shaping history derive not from the conflicts between the superhuman and the human, or between parents and children, or between siblings,

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* Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," *Marx and Engels Reader,* Robert Tucker, ed., (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971), pp. 75-76.

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or between men and women, or between nations; they derive rather from the conflict between classes, that is to say, between groups of people who get their livings in different ways. It should be possible to look at literature from a standpoint which accepts class struggle as the motor force of historical development and to find and interpret representations of the work experience overlooked or slighted by critics who bring to the reading of literature other assumptions about the world. While centrally concerned with the class psychology of writers and their creatures, Marxist criticism, at its best, is not blind to the human, national, sexual, and other trans-class traits of writers and writing. Marxist criticism is political in the sense that it ought to be of more use to those who want to do away with all hierarchies of class, race, sex, and nationality than to those who wish to keep society more or less as it is. It should help in preserving the achievements of bourgeois thought and art and help to incorporate them into the culture of a new society in which the split between the commanders and the commanded has been overcome—the society in which "the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all."

Familiar and influential American writing embodies a criticism of work as it affects and defines character. Writers in this vein respond to the question: What does work do to human beings? The answers are complex and variable, at times perhaps evasive. But those which scrutiny of the writing yields share at least one fundamental thought: the division of labor produces a fragmentation of personality. This thought is present in the work of writers who experienced the industrial revolution in the United States, as it is across the Atlantic, in the writing of the early Marx. The criticism of work in that generation is associated with a tacit or articulate utopianism which judges the present by the standard of a past or future world. In Marx's version, with the appearance of the division of labor:

> Each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he is not to lose his means of livelihood; while in a communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible

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for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.*

Marx's criticism of the alienating division of labor from the standpoint of an unalienated, because variegated and unspecialized, alternative mode of production does not differ substantially from Emerson's in the passage in "The American Scholar" where Man Thinking is counterposed to the Thinker, and Man on the Farm to the Farmer. In Emerson's version, the labor process of modern society chops people up "into so many walking monsters—a good finger, a neck, a stomach, but never a man." Characterizing individuals by the work they do, society degrades everyone from subject into object:

> Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing. The planter . . . sinks into a farmer instead of man on the farm. The tradesman . . . is ridden by the routine of his craft and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; . . . the mechanic a machine; the sailor a rope of the ship. . . . Man Thinking tends to become a mere thinker, or, still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking. ("The American Scholar," par. 5)

Both Marx and Emerson protest against what work does to the individual worker and against a society which types people according to their occupations and ties the worker to a single employment. For both, the condition protested against is historical, not eternal—it did not always exist and will not always exist. For Marx, the human fall from subject to object embodied in the division of labor and private property is a "consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations." It is "one of the chief factors in historical development up till now" and only an unprecedentedly profound revolution could ever overturn it, completing a leap from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom.

Despite what Thoreau writes in "Life without Principle" about the absence from literature of the theme of getting a living, writers who have shared his interest in the literary representation of work easily come to mind. Herman Melville clearly

* "German Ideology," *Marx and Engels Reader, op. cit.*, p. 124.

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saw the fragmentation of working humanity. He formed his vision of what happens to workers by direct observation and experience aboard the floating factory in which he went to sea in 1841 and indirectly as a witness to the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. Melville would not have known Marx's description of the division of labor in *The German Ideology* but would have been familiar with Emerson's in "The American Scholar." Illuminated by Marx and Emerson, *Moby Dick* can be understood as a representation of that "consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power over us, growing out of our control." In a group of narrators and protagonists familiar to readers of American writing, Melville's Ishmael stands out from others as one whose work experience is both cooperative and close to the center of American economic life. As a worker, Ishmael stands in contrast to the Thoreau of *Walden* for whom "a man thinking or working is always alone" (*Walden,* "Solitude," par. 12), and to Leatherstocking—that Adam wedded to the virgin forest or, better, that solitary hunter and trapper—who deliberately keeps his distance from the centers of social labor. Although like Ishmael they participate in cooperative labor, the colonists of Hawthorne's Blithedale community attempt to build a self-sufficient utopian socialist economy and withdraw as far as they can from involvement in American capitalism. In contrast to them, Ishmael works in an industry of national economic importance on board a vessel which becomes a metaphor for industrializing America in one of its tragic potential variant developments. I note such contrasts and comparisons here so that I may acknowledge that Melville's definition of Ishmael through work experience does not necessarily make him a more significant example for a discussion of the theme of work than, say, Cooper or Hawthorne. And writers as different as James, Dickinson, and Fitzgerald may contribute indirectly to the discussion of the relationship of work to personality in American literature. But whether work is represented by a particular writer as performed in isolation or in association, at the center or at the periphery of the national economy, within the view of the reader or out of sight, how work bears on the character of workers ought to command the attention of Marxist literary criticism.

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BOOKS

A MARXIST VARIANT?

By Carl Marzani

Eurocommunism and the State by Santiago Carrillo. Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1978. 172 pp., $4.50.

From Stalinism to Eurocommunism by Ernest Mandel. London: New Left Books, 1978. 223 pp., $5.95.

Marxism and Politics by Ralph Miliband. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. 199 pp., £3.50.

The development of Eurocommunism in the last few years has precipitated searching discussions on key issues of Marxist politics. The rapidly expanding library of books, monographs, and articles attests that this movement has served as a catalyst for a burst of creative analysis. For a rounded view of Eurocommunism, these three books are among the best available.

The first book is by the general secretary of the Spanish CP. It sets out some theoretical and practical arguments for Eurocommunism. The second book, by a theoretician of the Fourth International, is a severe critique of Eurocommunism. The third book, by a professor of politics, is a high-level study of Marxist politics. All three writers consider themselves Marxists and agree that the *raison d'être* of Marxism is to abolish capitalism; all three agree that class struggle is the motor of historical changes and that the function of a Communist party is to achieve these changes by educating and organizing the exploited and the oppressed.

Carl Marzani is finishing a book on Eurocommunism. A lifetime radical, he is a Spanish war vet, made a film exposing Truman's Cold War, and got 3 years in jail. There he wrote his first book on the Cold War.

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The three authors write with verve and color, a minimum of jargon, and an impressive familiarity with Marxist writings and socialist experiences. They stand on the shoulders of giants; at their disposal are 150 years of Marxist writings and experiences including 60 years of socialist governments now covering one third of the human race.

Carrillo's book is a coherent exposition of Eurocommunism and the state. In facing squarely the issue of revisionism, he writes:

> [Eurocommunism] involves a difference from Lenin's theses of 1917 and 1918. These were applicable to Russia and theoretically to the rest of the world at that time . . . [but] they have been overtaken in the developed capitalist countries of Western Europe. What has made them inapplicable is the change in economic structures and the objective expansion of the progressive social forces, the development of the productive forces (including nuclear energy), the advance of socialism and decolonization, and the defeat of fascism in the Second World War.
>
> It may strike some people as blasphemous to read that some of Lenin's theses are out of date; there are those who are unaware that Lenin said the same thing about Marx. . . . (p. 10)

Carrillo distinguishes between the collaborationist revisionism of social democracy and "Marxist *revolutionary* revisionism . . . proletarian revolutions revise themselves and revolutionaries do too. Lenin revised certain theses of Marx . . . also revised himself on several occasions. . . ." (pp. 17-18) The two kinds of revisionism are poles apart: "*There cannot be any confusion* between 'Eurocommunism' and social democracy in the ideological sphere. . . . What is commonly called 'Eurocommunism' proposes to *transform* capitalist society, not to administer it." (p. 104)

With this stance, Carrillo tackles the problem of the modern state—the key issue in Eurocommunism. In orthodox Leninism (as in Maoism and Trotskyism), the primary function of the state is coercive: the use of the army, police, and bureaucracy to enforce the policies of the ruling class and its preservation. There can be no change in society without first breaking up this coercive apparatus—"smashing" the state. Political power, said Mao, flows out of the barrel of a gun. This leads to a strategy of "insurrectionary politics" (Miliband's phrase, equivalent to Gramsci's "war of maneuver") requiring a Communist party which is a mobile striking force, tightly knit, centralized, able to respond quickly to shifting tactical situations. The quality, rather than the numbers, of party members is decisive: communists must be professional revolutionaries, disciplined, dedicated, fully class-conscious. Such is the

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Leninist party, a vanguard party, the general staff and shock troops of the working class.

Without minimizing the coercive functions of the state, Carrillo stresses as "essential" two other functions: the ideological and the economic. For the first he refers to Gramsci and Althusser, approvingly quoting the latter: "So far as we know, no class can maintain state power in a lasting form without exercising at the same time its hegemony over and within the state ideological apparatuses." (p. 49)

The second function is the role of the state as the *"director"* of the economy, increasingly revealing itself to all groups as "the definer and executor of economic management, which gives privilege to the few and harms the rest." (p. 25)

In chapter 2, Carrillo examines the channels of ideological hegemony—church, family, schools, etc.—showing how they are being eroded by the capitalist crisis. In chapter 3, he discusses the coercive apparatus and shows how the army, the police, and the bureaucracy are being influenced by the ideological erosion. Large sections of the personnel (working class and lower middle class) are being won over to socialist solutions, neutralizing other sectors and isolating the hard bourgeois supporters. The state can be taken over, and once in control, socialist forces can direct the economy: "Just as bourgeois society was formed in the womb of the feudal regime, so socialist society has matured in the womb of developed capitalist society." (p. 48)

The motive power in this process is still the class struggle, and the Communist party still plays a vanguard role. But, in Carrillo's view, it no longer assumes an *exclusive or controlling* role; on the contrary it accepts and defends a plurality of parties and seeks *enduring rather than tactical alliances*—it seeks "a *new political* formation." (pp. 99-101) The task of the Communist party is to develop a class-conscious democracy of the broadest kind, extending it to the economic sphere. Hence, a Eurocommunist party needs to be a mass party of millions, permeating the society, raising the class consciousness of the population, and establishing a Marxist cultural hegemony.

The insistence on grass-roots democracy entails a rejection of the Soviet and Chinese models, whether in achieving or maintaining power, and the creation of a new model of democratic socialism. Hence the criticisms, fraternal but resolute, leveled by Eurocommunists at existing socialist regimes which are regarded as authoritarian, particularly the neo-Stalinist USSR. Two final chapters, "The Historical Roots of Eurocommunism" and "The Dic-

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tatorship of the Proletariat," deal with popular frontism, the Spanish Civil War, and Titoism (chapter 5) and with the issues of bureaucracy and inner-party democracy (chapter 6).

Mandel's book is an unyielding attack on Eurocommunism from a Leninist (in its Trotskyist variant*) position, dealing not only with Carrillo (PCE) but with Marchais (PCF) and Berlinguer (PCI), the three leading protagonists of Eurocommunism. He also covers contemporary Marxist theoreticians, including the Frenchman Jean Elleinstein and the East German Rudolf Bahro, now in jail in the German Democratic Republic.

Mandel's book is such a sustained, all-encompassing critique of Eurocommunism that it will pre-empt the field for some time. As a follower of Trotsky, Mandel sees the roots of Eurocommunism in Stalin's theory of socialism in one country: "Soviet 'national messianism' [Trotsky's phrase] . . . was to lead to a proliferation of 'national communisms.' *In this sense, the threads of Eurocommunism were woven into the future of the world communist movement from the very moment the theory of 'socialism in one country' was adopted.* Trotsky, with his prophetic genius, understood this and proclaimed it from the outset. . . ." (p. 16)

For Mandel, Eurocommunism is a dialectical process which is at once the fruition and the subversion of Stalinism: counter-revolutionary within the imperialist world, progressive in the socialist world. In chapter 2, "Three Facets of Eurocommunism," he examines this movement *vis-à-vis* the imperialist bourgeoisie, the Soviet bureaucracy, and the West European working class. In its first aspect, "Eurocommunism represents a codification of . . . a policy of ever closer collaboration with their own bourgeoisies. . . . The counter-revolutionary role of the Communist party leadership had already been prefigured in Republican Spain in 1936-38. . . . Under *these* conditions [of present pre-revolutionary crisis] it marks a sharper and more open class betrayal than in the past." (pp. 42-45) Under the second aspect, there is

> the fear and hostility of the Kremlin. . . . In East Europe and the USSR the statements of the Eurocommunists in favor of political pluralism and democratic freedoms are avidly received *not* because they strengthen capitalism . . . but because they are seen as an alternative to the present political rule. . . . Therein lies the great objective explosive potential of Eurocommunism from the standpoint of the Kremlin. (p. 48)

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* Stalinism and Maoism are other variants.

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Under the third aspect, "the dynamics of Eurocommunism undoubtedly widens the *field of workers' democracy*. . . . In place of a series of solidified dogmas, we now increasingly find critical questions. . . ." (p. 54) This freedom of thought undermines neo-Stalinism in the West and is useful to revolutionaries because it clears the ground for them: "Eurocommunist strategy is doomed to failure . . . it is but a way station. For real communists there is no other road than Leninism, the road of the Fourth International." (p. 56)

Out of this ambivalent perspective, Mandel welcomes Carrillo's book (chapter 5) and analyzes the bitter Soviet attack on Carrillo (chapter 6) because "Carrillo's book offers every revolutionary powerful ammunition." (p. 86) Mandel is amazingly gentle with Carrillo, despising his strategy as he does, partly because of Carrillo's sharpness against the USSR and partly because "he explicitly rehabilitates Trotsky and Trotskyism . . . and Andrés Nin,"* calling Nin's murder "an abominable and unjustifiable act." (p. 83)

Nonetheless, Mandel is an implacable opponent of Eurocommunism. Chapter 9, "The PCF and the State," is a trenchant attack on its politics; chapter 8, "The PCI and Austerity," a telling critique of its economics. On politics, Mandel accuses Eurocommunists of denying the *class* nature of the state (p. 167); distinguishes between the top layers of the executive apparatus and the mass of underlings, arguing that the top hierarchs "constitute the famous 'state machine' which . . . the working class must smash" (p. 155); asserts the "tendential, and in the long run, irreconcilable conflict between the representative institutions of *indirect democracy* [*e.g.*, parliament] and the manifestations and institutions of *direct democracy*." (p. 163) Mandel dismisses cultural hegemony as a myth: "To believe that an educational system in a bourgeois state can be dominated by Marxism is to credit fairy tales." (p. 204)

On economics, Mandel argues that so long as capitalist relations of production exist, every Eurocommunist reform—nationalization, taxation, control of investments, etc.—can only strengthen the existing capitalist structure. The bourgeois state is designed to defend the socio-economic system. Moreover, Eurocommunist economies *have* to function within an international capitalist market.

* Andrés Nin, a former secretary of Trotsky, was the leader of the semi-Trotskyist party, the POUM, which supported the 1937 anarchist uprising in Barcelona. He was murdered, presumably by Stalin's agents, while being transferred from one Spanish jail to another.

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(pp. 135-137) Salvaging a "national economy" *means* salvaging the capitalist system. (p. 145) Presenting a *class* interest as *national* interest is an old mystification of capitalists, and the Eurocommunists use the same trick to abandon Marxism:

> The ideology of the "general interest," of the "fate of the nation" which must be of primary concern (Berlinguer uses both phrases again and again in the speeches cited), is obviously incompatible with the worn out theory of the 19th century lion of the British Museum that there is an *irreconcilable* conflict of interest between capital and labor, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. (p. 129)

In the final chapter, "The Strategy of Eurocommunism," Mandel goes for the jugular. Its strategy, he says, is the same as the strategy of "attrition" advocated by Kautsky as against the strategy of assault—what Miliband calls Lenin's "insurrectionary politics." This is the distinction made by Gramsci between the "war of position" and the "war of maneuver," but, says Mandel, in Gramsci the war of position was only *preparatory* to insurrection. Gramsci was a Leninist and not at all the father of Eurocommunism.

Mandel imputes to Eurocommunists Kautsky's view, where "the power of the bourgeoisie is represented as a fortress standing outside the social body . . . an image . . . profoundly mechanistic and erroneous. . . . Capitalism commands innumerable machine-gun nests stationed around its 'fortress,' within the very social body that is supposed to be besieging it." If any of these nests are assaulted, the attack "evokes precisely the inexorable, head-on test of strength the strategy was designed to avert." (pp. 191-192) Furthermore, even if a breach in the fortress is made, the strategy of a step-by-step siege gives the bourgeoisie the breathing time in which to rally and repair the breach.*

In the last few pages Mandel dismisses as groundless the Eurocommunist fear that an armed struggle might trigger a thermonuclear war. He argues that it would be difficult for the United States to intervene militarily, and if in fact they could, they would do so whether there was a gradualist approach to power, *à la* Allende, or an armed seizure.

Miliband's *Marxism and Politics* is not specifically directed at

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* The fortress and siege image has been used by Gilles Martinet, whom Mandel mentions, and who was quoted by the editors of MR (November 1976) to make the same point as Mandel is making. The point was answered by this reviewer in MR (June 1977).

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Eurocommunism; nevertheless, it is the best analysis to date of those issues which are key to Eurocommunism. The book is highly abstract—and highly relevant; it is closely reasoned, concise and meaty, so packed that it is refractory to summaries and should be read *in toto*.

There are two questions about Eurocommunism: Is it revisionist or Marxist in its theories, that is, will it bolster or abolish capitalism? And, if the latter, will those strategies work? Carrillo and Mandel deal with both questions, Miliband only with the first. Miliband is definitely not a Eurocommunist but one senses an open mind on the subject. As a result, while Carrillo and Mandel are polemical, pro and con, Miliband is more objective and less dogmatic. As he says: "There are many worse slogans than 'Everyone his own Marx.' For in the end, there is no 'authoritative interpretation'—only personal judgment and evaluation." (p. 5)

Revisionism has a bad name in Marxist historiography, and Carrillo's distinction between Marxist and anti-Marxist revisionism must be kept in mind. Lenin, Mao, Trotsky, Tito are all revisionists—they clarified, adapted, and changed Marx's theories to fit the conditions of their struggles to *abolish* capitalism. In contrast, Bernstein, the later Kautsky, and other social democratic theoreticians used Marxist phraseology to camouflage strategies of class collaboration. It is in this pejorative sense that revisionism is used against Eurocommunism.

The issue has been well stated by the editors of MR (June 1977): "We do not quarrel with the proposition that nothing that Marx or Engels or Lenin said is sacrosanct. . . . But if you are a Marxist, you must agree that there are some principles, doctrines, teachings, which have basically conditioned our understanding of the world, which have stood the test of time, and which are not to be discarded lightly."

Given these criteria, they consider Eurocommunism revisionist: "The hallmark of revisionism in Lenin's day was silent repudiation of Marx and Engels' writings on the state; the hallmark of today's Eurocommunist version of revisionism is equally silent repudiation of Lenin's *State and Revolution*. For us, this is the real heart of the matter: all the rest is derivative or secondary."

Miliband seems to agree that this is the central problem and hence it is the heart of his book. After making the point that political theory in Marx, Engels, and Lenin is ambiguous, fragmentary, and often contradictory (pp. 5-13), he devotes one quarter of his work (pp. 66-116) to the analysis of the state, stressing its relative autonomy. That the state has a degree of autonomy has always

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been a given from Marx onward; but, with the notable exception of Gramsci, that degree has usually been very small. Gramsci emphasized, and Miliband vindicates, the *extent* and *weight* of that autonomy, its many-sidedness and its consequences for political strategies. What makes Gramsci the theoretical precursor of Eurocommunism is not his distinction between war of position and war of movement, for he was a Leninist (here Mandel is right), but his analysis of the state and his emphasis on cultural hegemony (which Mandel rejects).

One fine example of Miliband's approach is his handling of Engels' famous "Introduction of 1895" to Marx's *Class Struggle in France,* published (with cuts) in the *Vorwärts* of that day. Carrillo quotes from the published version to show that Engels had considered a peaceful coming to power of the working class as a possibility in Germany; Mandel turns the quote against Carrillo by showing that Engels wrote vehement letters protesting the cuts (some made without his knowledge) which made him appear as a "peaceful worshipper of legality *quand même*," and condemning the "absolute renunciation of direct action." Miliband examines the full text (published by the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, 1930), reviews the controversy and goes on:

> But even though Engels had every right to complain that the editing of his text was misleading, the fact remains that *the unexpurgated version unquestionably shows a major shift of emphasis* from earlier pronouncements of Marx and Engels on the question of the suffrage and its uses. Engels emphatically denied that he was in any way suggesting that "our foreign comrades" should "in the least renounce their right to revolution." But he went on to say that "whatever may happen in other countries, the German Social-Democracy occupies a special position and therewith, at least in the immediate future, has a special task." (Italics added.)
>
> This "special task" was to maintain and preserve the growth of German Social-Democracy and its electoral support: ". . . not to fritter away this daily increasing shock force in vanguard skirmishes, but to keep it intact until the decisive day, that is our main task."
>
> Engels' reference to "the decisive day" suggests that he had by no means given up the notion that a revolutionary break might yet occur. . . . But . . . whatever Engels himself may have thought, his rejection of notions of "overthrow," even if bound up with specific conjunctural circumstances, was sufficiently decisive to give considerable encouragement to a much more positive view of what was possible under bourgeois democracy than had earlier been envisaged by Marx and Engels." (p. 81)

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Two succeeding chapters, "Class and Party" (chapter 5) and "Reform and Revolution" (chapter 6) complete the book. Throughout, Miliband's stance is one of pleasure, pride, and a sense of identification with Marxist texts, but he is not intimidated by them: he goes wherever his analysis takes him. Speaking of certain formulations in *The German Ideology* he says: "What is involved is an overstatement of the ideological predominance of the ruling class. . . ." (p. 53) Of another formulation of Engels: "This was not the case when he wrote these words, nor did it become the case later." (p. 90) He agrees with the proposition of Marx and Engels that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery," but this truth does not "confer validity on the proposition that Marx and Engels and Lenin linked with it, namely, that the existing state must be 'smashed' in order to replace it by 'the dictatorship of the proletariat.' . . . the link . . . is an *illusory* one." (p. 189)

Miliband thinks highly of Gramsci, though he has his differences with him, and doesn't refer to Eurocommunism. However, he speaks of a Marxist "reformist strategy" which seems to this reviewer a synonym for that doctrine. Certainly, without endorsing Eurocommunism, Miliband does establish a theoretical space for it in Marxist legitimacy. Whether this new variant of Marxism will work remains to be seen; but despite Mandel and MR, *there is no theoretical obstacle to its working.* All the caveats of Engels in the above example are embodied in Eurocommunist thought, including the likelihood of the bourgeoisie attacking the (for them) "fatal legality" of the democratic process, i.e., fascism. Eurocommunists have made it clear that any attempt at coups will be met with armed resistance: they mean business, and everybody knows it. The real task is to *prevent* coups; if they come, to smash them.

Miliband, though doubtful about the chances of success of a "reformist strategy" (i.e., Eurocommunism), is not at all doubtful about its validity. He concludes his book:

> A "reformist strategy," if it is taken seriously and pursued to its necessary conclusion, must lead to a vast extension of democratic participation in all areas of civic life—amounting to a very considerable transformation of the character of the state and of existing bourgeois democratic forms. . . . It may produce a combination of direction and democracy, sufficiently effective to keep the conservative forces in check and to *provide the conditions under which the process of transition may proceed.* . . .
>
> Such a strategy is full of uncertainties and pitfalls, of dangers and dilemmas; and *it may in the end turn out to be unworkable.*

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But it is just as well to have a sober appreciation of the *nature of the alternative and not to allow slogans to take over*. . . . Bourgeois democracy is crippled by its class limitations, . . . but [its] civic freedoms . . . are the product of centuries of unremitting popular struggles. The task of Marxist politics is to defend these freedoms; and to make possible their extension and enlargements by the removal of their class boundaries. (p. 190, italics added)

The uttermost extension of democratic participation is precisely the key tactic of Eurocommunism. Every suggestion of Professor Miliband is being enacted by the Italian party (PCI) as part of its strategy of cultural hegemony. This strategy, developing governing cadres and raising the class consciousness of the population, is creating that high level of culture which is the *necessary* condition for direct self-government. One can talk about the dictatorship of the proletariat *ad nauseam,* but a low level of culture is the breeding ground of an elitist, privileged, exploitative bureaucracy. Lenin saw this clearly as he lay stricken, and Mao sought to counteract it by the Cultural Revolution with its attendant risks and problems.*

As a confirmed Eurocommunist, this reviewer welcomes Miliband's book; it validates his own judgment. But it isn't simply a question of stroking one's prejudices: the times are too serious and the stakes too high. It is a matter of deciphering the real world and contributing to changing it. Hence, this reviewer also recommends Mandel's book, although questioning much of it, because it constitutes an early warning system of the pitfalls, dangers, and dilemmas that lie ahead. As such, even when mistaken, it is of great value.

* See *Lenin's Last Struggle* by Moshe Lewin and *Per La Cina* by Edoarda Masi. Not so incidentally, the strategy of cultural hegemony, bypassing Lenin, returns to Marx who *always* expected the revolution to take place in advanced countries, where the working class would have a high level of culture and be the heir of all the best in the past.

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(*Continued from inside front cover*)
English city, who himself struggled to the inevitable bitter end, bears in every line the stamp of autobiographical exactness. It is a little history of a short campaign in the eternal conflict between needy labor and shoddy capitalism. The wolfish competition of the workmen, the constant terror of unemployment, the petty tyranny of the foreman, the cringing servility to the employers, the secret betrayals, the speeding-up, the skimping of work—all are pictured with a remorseless veracity that is actually appalling."

It is with great sadness that we record the death on September 1, at the age of 29, of Ted Rosner while swimming off the coast of Nova Scotia in a tough sea. Ted, an activist in many radical causes (SDS, Venceremos Brigade to Cuba, etc.), was in his third year at Northeastern University law school. We were touched to learn that speakers at a memorial meeting, noting that Ted had been a loyal supporter of MR and a member of MR Associates for the last ten years, urged those who wished to honor his memory to do so through contributions to the Associates. We extend our sympathy to his family and many friends.

Readers may wish to supplement Jim Petras's excellent analysis of the great victory of the Nicaraguan people over the Somoza dictatorship (beginning on page 1 of this issue) with a study of the full (21-page) program of the new revolutionary government. This has now been translated by NACLA (151 W. 19th St., NYC 10011) and can be had for $1 a copy (75¢ plus 25¢ postage).

Anyone doing research on U.S. economic interests and activities in Asia will find very useful a publication entitled *Asia Monitor*, published by the Asia/North America Communications Center, a small group of Americans based in Hongkong, privately funded from non-business, non-government sources. AM is a quarterly based on all the English-language newspapers and magazines of the region; it synthesizes U.S.-related economic news items under country headings and indexes them by topics. For information on sub rates and other publications of the group, write to Asia/North America Communications Center, 2 Man Wan Road, Kowloon, Hongkong.

Wishing we had more young readers is one reason we were very pleased to get a letter from a subscriber which said in part: "I really enjoyed the recent articles on Marxian economics and socialism. . . . As a layman in this very complicated field, I find these practically oriented, simply written pieces of inestimable value. I can understand them, if you know what I mean. In so doing, I feel more a part of the crowd, not isolated by education, profession, knowledge." While we always try to write simply and in a way that is understandable to non-specialists—and nag our authors to do likewise—we know well enough that we are not always successful. This is where you, the readers, could be helpful. Give us specific examples of arguments or passages you find particularly difficult to understand, pinning down as nearly as you can the reasons: abstruse language, unfamiliar concepts, ambiguous exposition, etc. One must know the problems before one can find solutions.

From time to time we receive a bequest from a reader who felt, in his or her lifetime, that financial support would help make possible the continuance of MR as a completely independent magazine. Any reader who may be moved to follow this example should be careful to state exactly, in the will, that the bequest is to "Monthly Review, Inc., presently of 62 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011."

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